# Don't Worry, I'm Perfectly Fine by SimpleUser

**Category:** Danny Phantom
**Genre:** Abuse, Abusive Parents, Assault, Bullying, Danny has asthma but its not severe, Hurt Danny, Jazz suffers from anxiety and severe ocd, Multi, Rape, Trans Danny Fenton, Trans Male Character, Vlad adopts Danny and Jazz, Vlad is a Dad, danny abused, dash is a closeted gay UwU, disgusting ew, except i dont condone the way he treats Danny, fatherly vlad, ill make explicit trigger warnings for anyone who doesnt know wtf im talking about and needs them, jazz is gay, lesbian jazz, lol vlad immediately regrets everything, nasty rat boi, paulina is not cool, sam and tucker are awesome friends, vlad adopts danny, vlad adopts jazz, vlad finds danny hurt, vlad might be danny's real father
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**Summary:**

Jack goes on a trip to visit some relatives outside the country, leaving Danny, Jazz, and Maddie behind. Maddie begins to have doubts about her feelings for Jack and starts sleeping around while he's away, only to be caught when he decides to come home early. The family will never be the same, and Jazz and Danny are the ones who suffer because of it.
MAJOR TRIGGER WARNINGS FOR PHYSICAL&MENTAL ABUSE, NEGLECT, TRANSPHOBIA, HOMOPHOBIA, ASSAULT, DEPRESSION,

SELF BLAME, BULLYING, RAPE, ASSAULT, ETC (if the need for any more trigger warnings arise, I'll be sure to put them)

**Relationships:** Danny Fenton & Jazz Fenton, Danny Fenton & Tucker Foley & Sam Manson, Danny Fenton & Vlad Masters, Danny Fenton/ Paulina Sanchez, Danny Fenton/Sam Manson, Dash Baxter/Danny Fenton
**Comments:** 30
**Kudos:** 109

# Chapter 1

**Author's Note:**

> Hi guys! so as you can tell if you've read the tags and the description, this is a heavy angst story. I personally really love angst, but I understand that to some people, angst is a really personal thing for them, so if my story makes you uncomfortable in any way, please let me know. Also, I put a warning for transphobia/homophobia, but I want everyone to know loud and clear that I SUPPORT gay and trans rights, so if you don't, please feel free to leave my entire page alone because gay rights and trans rights are human rights, they're not a debate.
> (Quick note: I'm posting this story on my Wattpad account. So if you see this story on Wattpad, don't worry, it wasn't stolen, my account name is fanfic weeaboo. I made it when I was like, 10, so don't judge)

Danny was proud of himself. Lately, despite the many responsibilities he's had to shoulder, he seems to have been getting decently good grads. They're obviously nothing compared to that of his stellar sister, but it was quality work and he worked hard for it, so with a smile on his face, he walked home proudly.

When he got inside, he saw his father on the phone while his mother stood in the kitchen cleaning the dishes and counter top so she could prepare to cook dinner. Danny knew he hadn't failed any test or gotten any detentions recently, so he knew he had no reason to be afraid. But it was a very instinctive reaction for him to think he was somehow in trouble if he saw his dad on the phone when he got home from school. His nerves somewhat eased, however, when his mother sweetly waved to him.

"Hey mom...who's dad on the phone with?" Danny asked, tossing his bag on the couch. Maddie put away some newly cleaned dishes, moving on to wipe down the counter.

"Just one of his brothers, dear. He'll tell us the details when he hangs up" she responded. "Oh, could you pass me the potatoes? I'm gonna just keep it simple today and make mash and heat up some leftover meat" she explained. Danny nodded, grabbing the bag of potatoes from out the fridge and handing it to her. She thanked him, rinsing her potatoes under the faucet.

"Do you have homework, Danny?" she asked.

"Not today. Surprisingly, Mr. Lancer wasn't here today, so we had a sub" he explained.

"Well that's nice. Could you peel these for me then, since you're not busy?" she asked, handing him the potatoes.

"Yeah, sure" he agreed, grabbing them from her. He wasn't used to kitchen work, but he wasn't a total lost cause either. He could at least peel a few potatoes, though sloppy the job may be. "I got an A on my math test today" Danny said, handing his mom a few potatoes he peeled. She hummed in approval, her focus stuck on cooking. Danny frowned a bit at the lack of response, but he couldn't exactly complain. His mother was too busy to say anything, and even if she wasn't, this was just a test. It's no big deal. Maddie grabbed the leftover meat from the fridge and tossed it in the oven to cook.

"Dinner should be done in an hour, why don't you go take a shower and get changed. And if you have any work that's due later, you should get a head-start on that" she said. Danny nodded, leaving the kitchen to go handle his business.

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"Maddie, you will not believe what Justin said to me over the phone!" Jack exclaimed. Everyone was sitting at the table, waiting for Maddie to serve them their plates. Jazz didn't seem too interested, but Danny knew that deep down she's just as nosy as he is. It was almost funny to think about.

"What was it dear?" she asked, setting everyone's plates down. She finally took her seat next to Jack once everyone was served.

"Who's Justin?" Jasmine asked, not meaning to interrupt but blurting out anyway.

"He's your uncle" Jack answered dismissively.

"You'd think they'd tell their own kids that they have an uncle" she grumbled.

"So what'd he say?" Danny asked. Jack perked back up once he was able to speak again.

"Apparently he's getting married! And he wants ME to be his best man!" He exclaimed proudly. The voice he used was almost the same to that of when he'd speak so fondly of Vlad. It made Danny cringe a bit. "It's a shame I won't be able to go. But I'm honored as heck that I got that invite" he smiled.

"You should go" Maddie insisted. "You haven't seen any of your family in years! It'll be fun" she said. Jack smiled sadly for a moment before shaking his head.

"Nah, I miss them but I can't go. It'd be too expensive to bring everyone with me, plus, Jazz and Danny have school, and we still have to manage work" he sighed.

"Jack, I'm telling *you* to go, just you. We'll be ok here" Maddie assured. Jack smiled.

"Alrighty then, I'll go tonight!" He shouted, running off to pack his bags without giving a second glance to his plate.

"Man" Danny chuckled. "Dad must be really excited if he's not eating"

"Maddie! Can you make me another plate? I don't eat left overs, you know that!" Jack exclaimed from upstairs. Maddie groaned, sourly throwing away her husbands uneaten food.

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"Do you have everything you need? You know it's a long trip" Maddie asked, making sure Jack doesn't forget anything.

"Of course I do! Don't you worry about a thing sugar, I'll be back before you know it!" Jack exclaimed. Maddie smiled, leaning in for a kiss before her husband leaves, but as dense as he is, he didn't catch the hint.

"Well! I'll be off now! Write me! I love you!" He waved off, leaving without another word. Maddie fumed at this, but took a deep breath and quickly eased herself. She was used to this behavior. Not that she particularly liked it, she was just used to it.

"Mom, I'm gonna go to bed early, I'm really tired and I have a test early in the morning tomorrow. So uh...bye!" Danny hurriedly said, excusing himself so that she wouldn't bother him. That would be the last thing he needs. Not when a ghost was nearby. Maddie didn't even propery respond, she just sighed and nodded, heading to the kitchen. Danny felt bad seeing his mom so sad, but he didn't have time to comfort her. He made a quick dash for his room so he could lock the door before going ghost and flying away.

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Danny grumbled irritably, upset over having wasted his time. He wasn't particularly tired when he left the house, but that didn't mean he *wanted* to spend his evening fighting the box ghost. That guy really causes so much trouble and for no reason at all, it's frustrating. Danny ended up spending most of the night cleaning up *his* mess, and when his mother was confused as to why he was so tired despite going to bed so early, he had to put up a front so she wouldn't worry. Now he's even more tired from pretending he wasn't tired.

The day went on as usual; he went to class, barely paid attention, got pushed around in the halls, then went to lunch with his friends. It was a routine, one that he didn't like, but made due with.

"So, how'd you think you do on the test?" Sam asked Danny. He scoffed, knowing he probably failed.

"That test was easy" he lied. Sam gave him a smirk, the one that she wears when she knows he's lying.

"Ok you got me, that test kicked my butt. I guessed almost everything" Danny sighed. Sam pat his back affectionately.

"Don't worry, Tuck and I did too" she said.

"Yeah, if we fail, we fail together!" he said. The three drifted away from that topic and just casually chatted about other things before Dash came up to their table, his presence alone being the bearer of bad news.

"Yo, Fen-*turd,* follow me" Dash said, slamming his hands on the table. Sam and Tucker flinched a bit at the sudden loud noise, but glared up at Dash fearlessly.

"He doesn't have to go anywhere" Sam said sternly. Danny looked back at her, a bit nervously knowing that if she ticked him off, he'd get a way worse beating.

"Aw did I make your girlfriend mad?" he teased, harshly flicking her nose upwards. "You have a zit right there" he said flatly. His stupid jock friends all lost their heads at that, as if it were the funniest, most clever insult ever. Sam growled, quickly jumping out her seat to pounce at him without a single regard for their size difference. Tucker was lucky to have stood up fast enough to hold her back before she could do something she'd regret.

Before any more protest could be made, Dash grabbed Danny by the collar and dragged him away. Tucker took Sam away so she could walk off her steam.

"Augh-! Let me go Dash, I don't even bother you, why do you always do this!?" Danny exclaimed. Dash laughed, tossing Danny against a wall harshly. They were standing in a completely empty hallway. Danny wasn't even entirely sure if he was allowed on this side of the school since it was always so empty.

Danny was thinking of ways to wiggle himself out of the situation like he always did, but his thoughts were cut to a sharp halt when Dash did something no one would ever expect of him.

Danny let out a scream, a sudden adrenaline overcoming his fear of getting beat up. But he was too slow and too weak to get away.

"Shut it Fentina" Dash said in a low tone.

"Y-you..." Danny couldn't speak, his confusion and panic made it hard to breathe. Dash did it again.

He kissed him.

"Feels nice doesn't it? I always figured you looked like a girl. Not as cute as Paulina or anything, but whatever" Dash taunted. Danny clenched his fists. Dash couldn't know his secret, could he?

"You don't know anything!" Danny exclaimed. Dash smirked, pressing Danny against the wall a bit too roughly by the neck.

"I know *everything,* you little trap" Dash said. "I went though your student files. I was bored and I wanted to find something new to bully you for. I thought I was gonna find something stupid, like your dad not being your real dad or something. I didn't think I'd find *that"* he continued, his face looked almost as though he still couldn't believe it.

"You're not really a guy, are you?" he asked. Danny shoved Dash off him, his glare still sharp.

"I'm a guy, and I'm not gay" he said sternly. Dash grabbed him again, this time by the wrists. Danny winced in pain, Dash's grip was already leaving bruises.

"You're just a girl playing dress up. And if you tell anyone about this, I'll tell them about you" He warned, looking sharply in Danny's scared eyes before letting him go. There was a moment where they stared at each other in silence before Danny ran off to go back to his friends.

Never has he ever felt more unsafe than he did now. Danny felt almost as if being threatened with his identity was almost the same

as being threatened with his life. If word gets out that he's trans, he'll be ruined. And just his luck, the guy keeping that secret for him was the guy that's tormented him every single day.

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# Chapter 2

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> Hey sorry about the stray sentence last chapter, I meant to add that to this chapter but I didn't realize I was writing it in the wrong place. I deleted it, and I fixed this up a bit before I posted iit, so I hope you like! Please review and lmk what you all think! (And again, if anything I say comes off as ignorant, insensitive, or just offensive in any way, let me know and I'll do my best to change it)

It was nerve wrecking trying to convince Sam and Tucker that Danny was fine. He'd never had any need to lie to his friends, but he couldn't tell them what Dash had done to him, or why. Especially not Sam. Tucker already knows Danny's secret, but Sam was totally in the dark. Danny knew that one day he'd have to tell her. He likes her, and he has a feeling she likes him back, but right now there's too much on their plates for a relationship to happen just yet. And Danny knew it was wrong to hide something so important from his bestest friend when he knew full well that he intended to be something more for her. But he couldn't help procrastinating the day he has to come out for as long as he possibly could.

The trio went home, promising to call but knowing it was unlikely with the workload they got. Danny knew he probably wouldn't be getting any of it done though. He got a head start on his homework, but he knew he'd never finish if today proved to be like any other day.

And he was right. About 20 minutes into his work, his ghost sense came out with a cool breath. Danny quickly changed, chasing down whatever ghost was near. Surprisingly, it wasn't any huge threat, just some random ecto bunnies and small ghost monsters. It did take a while to find them all, but catching them wasn't too much of a hassle. Without breaking a sweat, he changed back and went home.

Danny was glad to see the living room empty when he entered. He didn't feel like coming up with some lame excuse as to why he was

out at this time. Of course, he probably should've just flown into his room in his ghost form, but he typically forgets to do that anyway. He was just about to bask in the peace and quiet before a scream ruined any chance of that. Danny was on guard, however, not caring for relaxing after recognizing that scream as his sister's voice. Knowing her, it could either be as big a threat as Skulker, or as teeny as a spider. No matter, he still followed the sound just to be safe.

"Jazz what happened!?" Danny exclaimed. He found her in front of their mother's room. But before he could get any answer, she screamed again and blocked the doorway.

"Danny no!" she shouted, but Danny was too alarmed to back down. And he immediately wished he hadn't looked after he saw his mother...naked, in bed, with another man...

Danny let out a scream too, quickly covering his eyes and running off. Jazz followed suit, both children unable to ever see their mother the same.

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The man had left right after Jazz and Danny started screaming and running, the mood having already been killed. But the awkwardness was very much alive when they came back down for dinner.

Danny and Jazz sat next to each other on the far end of the table, distancing themselves as much as they could from their mother. Maddie served them their food before sitting down with her plate, silently. Jazz picked at her food, unable to stomach anything after what she'd just seen. Danny couldn't even look at his food without feeling sick. Yet strangely enough, he found himself staring at his mother.

He felt questions swarm through his head. While the general discomfort from the situation hasn't exactly faded, he still also felt his adrenaline slowly decline and instead be replaced with a burning

anger. Is this how women treat the men they loved? Was this going to happen to him someday? And what about dad? When he finds out, is their family going to be broken? Danny soon found himself glaring at his mother. He felt as though his respect for her was gone. What he saw was just...disgusting.

"I'm sorry" Maddie said, looking down at her plate sadly. "I didn't mean for this to happen. I wasn't thinking, I was having doubts about my feelings for your father, and then suddenly I was given the opportunity to be with someone else and...it all happened so fast, I didn't mean for you two to see that"

Danny and Jazz looked away, their expressions still sour.

"Please, whatever you do, just don't tell your father" Maddie said. "He doesn't need to know, it'll only get worse if he finds out"

So that's it. She doesn't feel bad for what she did, she just feels bad that she got caught. Danny felt bad for his father. Jack was out having a great time right now, and when he comes home, he'll be excited to see his loving family. He has no idea that his wife just betrayed him. And when he finds out, he'll be heartbroken.

Danny got up and left, not bothering to finish his dinner or even clean up after himself.

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Every day felt dry now. Danny and Jazz would wake up in the morning, eat breakfast, and leave without saying a word to their mother. When they came back home, they knew their mother was still sleeping around. Some days she'd stay in her room so they could at least go to their rooms and pretend they didn't hear her loud moaning and squeaking of her bed. But some other days, they'd come home to find her on the living room floor, or sprawled on the kitchen table, or fucking in random areas of the house. Every time that happened, Danny would have a huge fight with his mom and her suitor. And every time, Jazz would have to intervene before it got physical. Sometimes, it *did* get physical, and Jazz would be left to patch up her beaten brother while their mom sent her partner away.

Danny grew bitter from it, his respect for his mother diminished the day he caught her cheating on his dad, but it only worsened every time it happened. And he slowly began to resent her every time a new partner would beat him and his mother would stand there, doing nothing but crying. She was strong enough to do something, anything, he was sure of it. He had hands on experience with combating her, and she's one of his trickiest opponents. Yet she doesn't use her skill to help her own son from being beaten bloody from any rando she picks up off the street. Its like her one night stands mean more than her children.

Danny wanted to give her the benefit of the doubt. Maybe she's just obsessive over new men because she knows Jack would be coming home soon. Maybe she never meant for it to get this far. And Danny knew he still loved his mother greatly, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't help feeling angry.

It feels like every time he sees his mother cheat on his father, he sees himself going through the same pain he imagines his father will be in. What if when he gets into a relationship, his girlfriend cheats on him just like his mother cheated on his father countless times?

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Danny walked to school with his head hanging low. Last night, he'd had enough of his mother's affairs and finally confronted her about it.

*"What a woman does with her body is none of your business Daniel!"* his mother exclaimed.

*"It becomes by business when you're cheating on dad! And you don't even have the decency to be private about it! What kind of example are you setting for your kids!? You're tearing us apart!"* Danny responded.

*"You wouldn't understand! I've been married for 15 years and I'm tired of this boring life! I want a man to excite me, I don't want commitment. But you're a child, you can't understand how I feel"*

*"Then leave!"*

Danny was immediately silenced when Maddie slapped him sharply across the cheek. She may not have realized how strong her swing was, but when Danny reached to rub the sting away, he winced in pain.

*"You don't ever tell me what to do, you're a child! Now go to your room!"*

Danny's cheek was bruised from last night, just touching it was painful enough to make him wince. He shook his head, he was too tired to be angry at her right now. He had a test to worry about, so that's what he would worry about. He tried to ignore the hurt on his cheek, or the sadness in his chest from how his mother was acting, or the crushing anxiety of what his father would say when he got home tonight...

Danny pushed all those thoughts back. He didn't have the mental strength to think about any of it. And when he walked into his classroom, he realized he had other things to worry about. Everyone stared in shock at the kid who was always late, somehow arriving on time as if that were such a bizarre sight. Danny ignored all the stares, sitting down on his normal chair. But as soon as his weight rested on it, the chair collapsed and Danny fell to the floor with a painful thud.

"Ah- Hey! Who switched my chair for this broken one!?" Danny exclaimed. Everyone in the class laughed at him, and Danny growled in anger. He took a deep breath, however, keeping himself collected as he calmly grabbed a regular chair to sit on.

Mr Lancer entered the room, hushing everyone's laughter as he announced the test. Danny ignored the perplexed look on his teacher's face when the man saw his problem child in his seat on time for once, as he handed out test papers.

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Sam wasn't in school today. Danny met with Tucker once lunchtime rolled around, but they were surprised their goth friend wasn't there to complete the trio. Danny used one of Tuckers PDA things to video call Sam once they sat down with their food.

"Hey guys- oh shoot, I'm sorry I forgot to call, I've been in bed all day!" Sam explained, face palming.

"It's fine, we were just wondering if you were ok since you didn't come to school" Danny asked. Sam groaned weakly closing her eyes as if she were in pain.

"Look its...don't laugh" she sighed. Danny and Tucker nodded, confused but compliant.

"Ugh" Sam groaned once more. She seems crabby. "I just...*I just got my period"* she said, quieting her voice to a whisper. Tucker snorted a bit, but covered his mouth to stop himself from laughing even though he really wanted to.

Danny and Sam glared at him. But Tucker was silently wheezing in laughter, tears pricking at his eyes as he desperately tried to compose himself.

"I knew you guys would be immature about this" Sam said bitterly. "I'm in pain so I'll talk to you when I feel better" she said, hanging up.

Danny felt bad. He wasn't sure how bad her cycle was, but he knew that when he got his, he felt like garbage the entire time. Dysphoria aside, it's just plain uncomfortable. No one ever talks about how bad it really can be, but periods are awful. The cramps, the nausea, the lack of appetite, the sudden massive appetite, the mood swings, the sudden weakness in your body, the heaviness of your body, the bloating, the diarrhea, the constipation, the dizziness, the soreness all over your body, the headaches, the many many other pains...

"Lighten up Danny, I'm sure you'll see her tomorrow" Tucker said, breaking the silence. Danny didn't realize he was thinking so much, but he was brought out of his thoughts to see his best friend eating a sandwich. It was a light heartening sight, but it didn't last long. Danny was brought back to his memories of what's been happening

to him at lunch every day.

Ever since Dash found out about Danny's secret, Dash has been doing things to him every day, things that made him feel awful. He'd kiss him, touch him, sometimes he'd even grope him. And if he complained, Dash would hit him. It wasn't unusual for the bully to hurt Danny, but the difference in nature was confusing, and it was scary.

"H-hey Tucker, um..." Danny fiddled with his thumbs nervously, looking around almost frantically. He swallowed a lump that built up in his throat, feeling as though he were about to cry. The tech geek looked at his friend with concern, his goofy nature taken over by seriousness. Danny never spoke first about when something was bothering him, the only time he'd ever done that was when he came out as trans.

"C-can I...can I talk to you about something?" Danny asked, his voice weakening as he hugged his arms tightly. He looked as though he were shaking, but it was the middle of spring, it was too warm to be shivering.

"Dude, whatever it is, you can tell me. I'll always be your friend, and your secrets are my secrets" Tucker assured, resting a hand on Danny's shoulder. Danny looked up at him with a small smile, ready to talk. But before he could, Dash came back to ruin Danny's day even more.

"What's up Fen-tonia, you ready for your daily beat down?" Dash asked menacingly, but didn't flex threateningly like he usually did. Instead he eyed him hungrily, his smirk resembling the kind you'd see guys giving other girls. Danny shrank in his seat, not budging but wearing his best glare he could muster to hide his fear. Dash laughed, snatching Danny out his seat by the hair.

"Hey! Leave him alone!" Tucker shouted, standing up both physically, and metaphorically for his best friend. For a moment, all eyes were on him, and Tucker was almost surprised he didn't bask in his five second glory, being too focused on helping Danny. But the moment was short lived when Dash's jock friends started pushing him around. Everyone laughed at the geek that was too weak to defend himself,

while Dash dragged Danny away to their secluded little corner of the school.

# Chapter 3

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> Hey, so I deleted my other trans danny story because I felt like it wasn't going anywhere, and I'm personally happier writing angst. So this story will be my main work

"Dash, stop" Danny said flatly. His back was pressed against the wall as the jock was exploring the boy's body like he'd recently begun doing regularly. The first time Dash had touched Danny, he lost his mind when he learned that Danny had small perky breasts tucked tightly under a binder he wore every day. He was even more crazed when he ventured down below and found a completely different territory to what he himself was packed with. Danny wasn't exactly sure why Dash was so shocked at the time. He knew the jock had full knowledge of his secret, he knew Danny was a trans male. Did he expect his body still be  a man's body? Danny bitterly scoffed at the idea. By now, he's been a guy for so long, he was sure his parents forgot they ever even had a girl. He couldn't get surgery until he was an adult (and either way, it's too expensive) and he can't start taking hormones until he begins the long, long process of therapy and physical examinations. A process which he knew his parents would be entirely against. And he didn't have the guts to talk about it, especially not now, with how messy his family was about to become...

"I don't get why you wanna be a guy so bad, you'd make a pretty sweet chic" Dash said, fondling Danny's breasts. The sensitivity in that general area had lost its intensity, with how much he wears his binder. Still, even if he could barely feel anything, just the idea of being handled like a woman was enough to make him sick. Not to mention that the one doing it was the guy who abused him every. single. day.

"Why don't you go mess with an actual girl" Danny asked. "Or does no one want a girl obsessed jerk?" he spat. Dash punched him in the face, the loud sound bothering him more than the pain.

"Just shut your trap Fenton, you don't understand what it's like!" Dash shouted, clenching his teeth tightly. Not that Danny cared, but it looked like he was gonna cry. That's new.

"You don't know what it's like living with my family!" He sniffled. "The way they care about my image more than me, the way they tell me to be perfect but then they buy me sports gear instead of food! I don't even *like* regular girls! I just hang around them because I'm so awesome"

wow. Even in tears, he's still a self centered prick.

"You're the only girl I like, cuz you don't look like a girl, but you're still a girl no matter what you say" he said threateningly. Dash choked Danny roughly, holding him up against the wall. "I don't like regular girls, I like *you"* he said possessively. Danny choked, unable to breathe. "And you're not allowed to say you don't like me back or I swear I'll beat you to a pulp and then I'll tell everyone who you really are. I'll ruin you before you even get a life"

Danny let a tear roll down his cheek as his eyes rolled up from the lack of air. Dash dropped him to the floor without caring whether he was ok or not. Danny coughed weakly, struggling to regain his breath as he lied limply on the floor.

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"Danny, are you ok?" Tucker asked with a serious tone. "You looked really out of it after lunch today"

"I'm fine. Dash kinda knocked the wind outta me, I'm just tired" it really wasn't a lie. Tucker knew there was more to it though. He's not as stupid as he usually seems to be, he knows when something is wrong with his friends.

"Ok well...you wanna tell me what you were gonna tell me earlier?" he asked. Danny shook his head with a sigh.

"Nah it's...it's stupid. I don't really wanna talk about it anymore" Danny said. "I think I'm gonna go to Sam's house today. You go on ahead, I'm gonna run to the store to get her some things"

"Aw that's sweet. Don't make me the third wheel when you guys start dating" he winked. Danny blushed but before he could argue, Tucker hit the road.

Danny sighed, taking a moment to himself just to enjoy some sweet, sweet silence.

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"Daniel, what are you doing here at this hour?" Sam's father asked, surprised but also a visibly bothered that a boy was coming to visit his daughter so late in the evening.

"I uh...I heard she wasn't feeling well. And, y'know, Sam's my best friend so I uh...I came here to check on her. A-and I brought her some things" Danny stammered. He knew Sam's parents were judgy, they didn't like him much and he couldn't blame them. But he really wanted to see her, so he didn't wanna leave a bad impression on her father when he was the one who could deny him entry to their house. Luckily, he didn't do that, and he welcomed the boy into the house. Danny quickly thanked him before running off to Sam's room.

"Danny?' Sam called out in surprise. "What are you doing here? Don't you have homework? And how did you get my parents to let you in?" She asked, sitting up on her bed.

"Don't worry about it, I just came to make sure you're ok. I brought you all the things I thought you might need. I know your family probably has it covered, but I figured you'd be too embarrassed to tell them about this so...yeah" he said, pulling up a chair to sit by her.

"Aw, Danny that is the sweetest thing ever" she said.

"Is this your first?" he asked, a bit too forward of him, but he couldn't

take it back, so he just looked away in embarrassment.

"y-yeah..." Sam said sheepishly. "Don't laugh at me like Tucker did!" she said sharply. Danny smiled. He missed her, attitude and all. He'd been so stuck in all the bad things happening to him, that he hadn't given himself the opportunity to just enjoy the little things.

"I won't, don't worry" Danny said with a smile. "Don't get embarrassed, but I want to help" he proposed a bit more gently. Sam raised a brow.

"That's sweet, but no offense here, what would you even know about a woman's cycle?" she asked. Danny awkwardly looked away, his heart pounding.

Is this it? Should he say it?

"I..." he felt his stomach doing back flips. "Well...the truth is, I'm..."

He gulped, sighing a bit to ease the tension he felt.

"The truth is, that I'm always there to help my mom and sister when they have theirs, so I'm not as immature about it as Tuck, and I think I might actually be able to help you"

Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!

"Oh, well that makes sense. I should've known the girls in your house would teach you this stuff. I just wish my mom taught me about it" Sam sighed.

"Ha...yeah" he felt ready to cry, ready to just throw himself out the window. "Um, I uh, I got you this stuff" Danny said, handing her a bag full of stuff.

Pads of different sizes, a heat sack, bars of dark chocolate (Sam's favorite, the vegan kind with the weird fiber nuts inside), pain killers, vitamin gummies, body oil, and exfoliant soap.

"If you feel really bad stomach pain or headaches, you could take some pain killers. And I got you that chocolate you like just in case you have a chocolate craving. You obviously know what pads are,

but they're different sizes, so you just have to figure out which one you like best. And the heat sack is for when your cramps are bad, or when your body feels sore. You put it in the microwave for a minute or two and then lie with it" he explained. Sam nodded, blushing a bit out of shame. But Danny didn't comment on it. He knew this must be embarrassing, so he tried to be as quick with this as possible.

"O-oh...uh...yeah, um, sometimes your *ahem* *chest*, it's gonna hurt a lot. So when that happens, it's good to lay on your side so the pain doesn't go to your back" he explained, blushing at the mention of her chest. He held up the body oil shyly. "This is for when that happens...you just rub it on and-"

"Right! I get the point!" Sam exclaimed, covering her chest. Danny blushed and covered his face. "I-I'm sorry, go on" she said shyly.

"It won't take the pain away completely, but it kinda helps" he said. "And i guess this is the last thing, but try not to eat a lot of oily or saucy foods on your period unless you have a really strong craving for it. Your face is gonna get really oily and you might get pimples. I got you the exfoliant scrub just in case" Danny said. He decided he wouldn't tell her about the bathroom issues she might face, as that would further her embarrassment.

"Thanks Danny, it means a lot to me that you went to all that trouble for me" Sam said, still blushing. "Don't tell anyone about this. It never happened" she said sharply, to which Danny gladly nodded.

"See you in school tomorrow?" he asked.

"Hopefully" she chuckled.

The two teens stared into each others eyes softly, innocently. It made Danny's heart flutter. He could stare at Sam forever and never get tired. But it was short lived when the sudden image of his mother popped into his head. He knew Sam would never do to him what Maddie did to Jack, but his trust was fragile because of it and he couldn't help it.

"I-I have to go"

_____

Danny walked home slowly, his mind wrapped around Sam. It felt nice to take care of her, to be innocently embarrassed yet appreciative of each other's company. It felt nice. But it was wrong. Danny felt like an idiot for not coming out when he had the chance. He felt like a fraud for letting their friendship get so far when her image of him was a lie. He didn't know what to think of it, but he kept beating himself up about it.

When he got home, he was a bit surprised to see that his mom was not only nowhere in immediate sight, but was also not making any noise. It confused Danny, but it also worried him. He went to the kitchen to see if maybe she was making dinner. But instead, he saw Jasmine cleaning ten things at once with streams of tears running down her face. Danny quickly ran up to her, to stop her in the midst of her cleaning frenzy to ask her what was wrong. But she just bit her lip, a strange breaking sound squeaking from her throat when she tried to speak before she dropped her face into Danny's shoulder to let her wailing sobs out in peace.

Danny rubber her back in circles, panic beating in his chest from how she broke down. He'd never seen his sister lose control of herself before. What could have possibly happened!?

"jazz, what happened?" Danny asked once her crying had stopped. She lied weakly in his arms for a bit before sniffling and sitting upright.

"It's dad" she whispered. "He came back home today...he came back while mom was...doing things" she explained. Danny went pale, not knowing what to expect next.

"He was so angry...I've never seen him so angry before Danny" she began to cry again as she spoke. "A-and he started to b-beat h-her, and yell a-and h-he was throwing things" she sobbed. "And when I tried to stop him, h-he pulled my h-hair and he t-threw m-me" Danny

felt a cold rage in his chest at the thought of their father hurting his sister. He knew Jack would be angry, but he didn't think he'd be *this* angry.

"Where is he" Danny asked angrily. Jazz hugged him tight, not wanting him to move from his spot as she began to cry again.

'Don't" she pleaded weakly. "Please, I already had to take care of mom...I don't want him to hurt you too" she hiccuped. Danny was so angry, so heartbroken, that his family had become such a mess. His mother that he loved and respected had become a sex addict, his ever so happy father was now a bitter abusive man, and his awesome older sister that always knew what to do was now on her knees begging him to just do nothing. But how could he do nothing when he had all these feelings bottled inside?

"Did he hurt you?" Danny asked. Jazz shook her head.

"He threw me out of the way but he didn't hit me or anything" she said. Danny nodded, hugging her again.

_____

It was near impossible to fall asleep in the eerie silence of his house. Danny cried his bitter tears all throughout the night. He had longed for silence ever since his mother started sleeping around, but now that he had it, he wanted nothing more than just a little sound. Just a little bit. At least give him something so he'd at least know his mother was alive, that his sister was still ok, that his father still loved them...

But there was nothing more than the sounds of his whimpers and cries.

The next morning, the smell of something burning woke him up. He usually woke up to the smell of his mother's cooking, but lately, she

hasn't been making any breakfast for him to smell in the morning. She couldn't have suddenly lost her touch in the kitchen though, right?

Danny walked downstairs, dressed for school but still exhausted from his sleepless tearful night. He saw his mother staring lifelessly over a pan that held a burned pancake in it. There was a stack of perfectly fine ones on a plate next to it, but this one seemed to catch her attention.

"Mom...?" Danny called weakly. "Are you ok?"

Danny was terrified of what turned around to face him.

His mother's face, littered with cuts and bruises and swelling, her eyes devoid of the light they always had. Danny gasped in shock, taken by surprise by the unexpected disfigurement of his mother's face. But in his shock, he had flinched a bit too hard, stumbling back into something behind him.

"Daniel"

Danny froze, looking behind him to see his father, exhausted and quite visibly angry. Danny backed away from him, a bit more carefully than he had with his mother.

"Sorry dad" he whispered. This wasn't good. His dad only ever called him Daniel when he'd done something wrong. And although Danny didn't know what he'd done wrong, he didn't want to have to find out.

"Damn right you're sorry. Stupid kids" he grumbled under his breath, sitting at the table. "Maddie! Where's my breakfast!?" he shouted, making Danny's mother flinch sharply. She dropped the plate of pancakes she was just holding onto, and she froze in fear as it began to fall. Danny, thankfully, was able to catch it, but one of the pancakes had fallen onto the floor before he could catch it. He quickly gave her the plate, picking up the stray pancake and throwing is away.

"Thank you sweetie" Maddie whispered in terrified relief. She took

the plate to Jack, but he glared down at it childishly.

"I said I wanted six pancakes. Why is there four" he asked angrily.

"One of them got stuck to the pan and it burned. I was just about to make you another. And one of them fell just now" she answered shakily. Jack stood up from his seat, pushing his wife roughly and making her fall on her back.

"You *know* money is tight right now, and you're wasting food!?" Jack shouted. Maddie began to cry, backing up in terror.

"Mom!" Danny exclaimed. But when the focus was shifted onto him, Danny began to shake in fear despite how angry he was. Jack gave him a glare, as if daring him to do something he'd regret, while Maddie looked at Danny with a look of terror, as if she were more afraid of Jack hurting him than hurting her.

"Mom..." he took a deep breath to steady his voice. "I need you to give me a ride to school today. I-I forgot that I had to be there early and I don't think I'll make it if I walk" He explained, lying through his teeth. Jack glared darkly at Danny while Maddie sighed, her fear slightly subsided but her sadness remaining stagnate.

Jasmine came downstairs, dressed up more cleanly than usual and her hair done more perfectly than normally. She looked anxious, as though she were unsure of what to do with herself. But as soon as she saw Jack staring Danny down, and her mother on the floor in fear, she froze.

"What? Do you suddenly need a ride to school too Jasmine?" Jack asked angrily. Danny looked at her with pleading eyes, nodding his head as to silently tell her to say yes.

"Y-yes!" she squeaked.

Jack grumbled, grabbing Danny and Jazz by the wrists and dragging them outside. They all went to the van, scrambling to get inside before Jack changed his mind, or worse, got even more mad. Danny saw the way Jazz's hands shook like leaves over her lap, and he couldn't help but feel bad.

# Chapter 4

Danny was oddly focused on his work today. My Lancer didn't think much of it the first few days he started coming to class on time, but it seemed rather odd that he just suddenly stopped being tardy altogether, and works harder than ever before. Not that he was complaining, he was proud of the boy, but he couldn't help wondering if something had happened to make him care more about school. Lancer certainly wouldn't be questioning it if Danny's behavior had improved like this after receiving a call home, but Mr. Lancer knew that he hadn't called the Fenton household in quite some time. Maybe his sister had something to do with it.

"Hey Danny" Sam whispered, taking her seat next to him. "Thanks for everything yesterday, it really helped"

"That's great. I'm glad you're back" he said, smiling.

Class went on tiresomely, and Danny found that his focus was becoming weak. He let out a sigh of relief when his ghost sense went off, meaning he could finally get a breath of fresh air and get away from this stupid class. Of course, with his good behavior lately, Mr Lancer let Danny go free from class.

Danny transformed, rushing to where his sense led him, which was right outside.

No...

Danny inwardly cursed himself for being so excited when he laid eyes on Spectra. Why her? Why couldn't he get Skulker? Or Johnny? Or literally any ghost that doesn't use emotional turmoil as their fuel. But no matter, he still had to get rid of her before she could hurt anyone at the school.

"Spectra!" Danny called, flying towards her. The woman giggled, turning to face the half ghost.

"Ah just my luck. How's your sister Danny? Still thinks you're a loser?" she taunted. Danny scowled at that.

"No, but she thinks *you're* a big bully" Danny retorted. She smirked.

"Nice to know I'm doing a good job" she said.

———

Danny ended up coming back around lunchtime, battered and bruised all over. He almost cried when he saw the time. Lunch was his hell hour, the hour when Dash would take him away...

Why couldn't Spectra stick around for just a little longer?

Danny cringed at the thought. Never had he ever thought he'd think that in his life. Good riddance to that no good jerk woman.

"Danny, you ok?" Sam asked. Danny snapped out of his thoughts, suddenly aware of his surroundings. Despite how he dreaded lunch time, he unconsciously made his way to the cafeteria. He quickly nodded, assuring her that he was fine, just daydreaming a bit.

"Fen-tonia!"

Danny flinched at the call of his nickname. He was really not in the mood...

"You know the drill" Dash said. "Get over here, nerd!" He exclaimed. Danny clenched his fists. He'd had enough.

"No" he said. "Dash, I am really not in the mood today. Please, just let me eat my lunch with my friends in peace for *one* day" Danny felt the words come out tiredly, as if he might as well have not said them because he almost didn't even care anymore. But Dash looked a bit taken aback by Danny's defiance that he backed down.

Not without throwing a tray of food at him first, of course.

Never had Danny been so happy to be covered in disgusting school food. Sam and Tucker quickly rushed to help him clean off, ignoring

the crowd of students laughing at them loudly.

———

"Danny, can I talk you for a moment?" Tucker asked after school had ended. Danny was packing his things to go home for the day. Sam had gone to the bathroom and said she was gonna wait for her parents to send their limo driver to come pick her up cuz she didn't feel like walking. Danny would have offered to take her home, but he had to get home as soon as possible to make sure his mom was ok.

"What's up?" Danny asked, tossing his bag over his shoulder. Tucker looked down for a moment before looking at Danny with stone hard seriousness.

"Don't lie to me; Dash is doing something and I wanna know what it is" he said. Even though the classroom was empty, Danny was still scared beyond words to speak on the issue.

"Danny, I know you wanna handle everything on your own, but I'm your friend. I'm here for you" Tucker said, trying to assure Danny that everything was ok. Danny looked down, his chest pounding painfully. He looked back up with the fakest smile plastered on his face. "I'm *fine"* Danny said. Tucker frowned. There was a moment of silence between them where Danny's smile strained under his fears and pain, whilst Tucker's frown remained but his eyes grew softer. Danny eventually cracked under the pressure and tears streamed from down his face.

Tucker immediately wrapped his arms around his friend, hugging him tightly and letting him cry into his shoulder. Countless times, the geek had been called gay for simply doing small things like this for his friends. And it made him sad that that was even an insult, and even sadder that people actually were so sensitive to it that they just couldn't hold their friends when they needed it. But Tucker was used to being bullied. He was used to being ridiculed for every little aspect of who he was as a person. So being made fun of for holding his best

friend in a time like this was nothing.

Tucker and Danny stood still for a few minutes, only the sound of Danny crying could be heard. But Tucker didn't say anything about it. Eventually, Danny had calmed down from his emotional breakdown, simply resting his face in his best friend's shoulder.

"The girly nicknames seem to be more of a constant now" Tucker said. Danny clenched Tuckers shirt a bit tighter, which told Tucker that he was onto something.

"He found out" Danny whispered. "He was looking through my files because he wanted to find something to bully me about, and when he found out, he started calling me a girl a-and he...he-" Danny began struggling to breathe. Tucker grabbed Danny's arms firmly but gently, guiding him through some breathing exercises so that he wouldn't hyperventilate. Danny calmed himself, but began to cry again, pointing to random areas around his body weakly.

"H-he touched m-me..." he whispered breathlessly. Danny was at least able to take a few slow breaths, but he still felt panicked. Tuckers eyes widened. He wanted to shout, he wanted to shake Danny and slap some sense into him. But for the sake of his friend, he stood calm.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Tucker asked. Danny shook his head.

"He'll out me if he finds out I told anyone, you can't say a word about it" Danny said, his voice desperate.

Tucker didn't want to, he wanted to argue, to tell Danny that he was being stupid. But in spite of himself, he swallowed the bile in his throat and nodded. He wouldn't tell anyone if he knew that this would put him in danger.

———

Danny went home with a limp. His leg was hurting ever since his

fight with Spectra. It wasn't broken or anything, it looked a bit swollen though, so he must've sprained it at the ankle. He hoped his mom was ok, he didn't want to have to see her get hurt. Not while he's weak like this.

When he got home, he saw his mom lying on the floor, naked, and littered in cuts and bruises. Danny hated to see his mother like that, but he still felt weird about his mother's naked body. So he ran upstairs to his room and grabbed a blanket from his bed. He draped it over her body before picking her up and putting her on the couch so that she'd at least be a little bit comfortable.

"mmn...Jazzy?" She murmured.

"No, mom...it's me" Danny said, not making eye contact. He loves her, he really does, but somehow, he still can't help but be angry at her.

"Danny..." she whispered. "I'm so sorry"

Danny ignored her, going to his room to do his homework. He heard the door downstairs open, and he felt his heart stop for a moment. It could either be Jazz, or their father, and he really hoped it was Jasmine. Anger aside, Danny wanted still wanted his mom to be ok, and he knew Jasmine knew how to take care of her. But despite his hopes, the booming voice of his father was evidence enough of who was downstairs.

"Daniel! Get down here!" Jack shouted.

Danny quickly scrambled to get downstairs, scared that if he stalled, his father would do something bad to him.

"Yes dad?" Danny answered, leaning his weight on his healthy leg.

"I didn't wanna bother you before you went to school because I wanted you to focus, but now that you're home, I wanna make some things clear to you" Jack said sternly. "come closer"

Danny flinched at the tone of his voice but still neared his father despite his limp. Jack stared him down, his face tougher than most of the ghosts he'd fought recently. Jack grabbed Danny by the shirt, lifting him off his feet a bit.

"You knew my wife was cheating on me the whole time, didn't you" he whispered angrily. Danny's eyes widened, fear plastered on his face. "DIDN'T YOU" Jack screamed, slamming Danny against a wall. Danny cried out in pain, clawing at Jack's gloved hand to try and loosen the man's grip on him.

"You knew, and you didn't say *anything*. A man doesn't let a woman just sleep around however she wants Daniel, a man doesn't keep secrets from his father! A man doesn't cry when he's in pain, or run to his sister cuz he's *scared*. Do you understand me!?" He shouted. Danny fearfully nodded, panicking in his father's grip. Jack slammed him against the wall again, a ringing pain searing through Danny's ears as he did so.

"You're not a man. You're a disgrace" Jack spat, dropping his son to the floor.

Please don't say it...

"You're just a girl who wants to be one of the boys"

Danny felt his chest tighten. He got up and looked his father daringly, unwilling to take this any longer.

"You told me you loved me. You told me you *accepted* me!" Danny spat. "I will *never* be a girl!". Jack glared at him, obviously furious about the backtalk.
Jack slapped Danny in the face, pushing him until he hit the floor and continuously hitting him all over his body as would a bully taunting their victim, slowly progressing in strength as if *daring* him to fight back.

"You'll be a girl until you learn how to act like a man!" Jack shouted, landing one last punch into Danny's stomach and getting up. He made a point to step on Danny as he walked away, paying no regard to how severely he hurt his own son.

_____

Danny was in his room for the rest of the evening. Even when Jazz came home and knocked on his door to check on him, he didn't budge. He didn't want to talk to anyone.

He felt bad about it after a while. He hadn't heard his dad go crazy on anyone else, so he could at least assume that his mom and sister were safe, but that meant that he was probably busy with something. He knew that more than likely, since Maddie weren't busy, she wouldn't cook dinner or check on either of her kids. And he was right.

The next morning, when Danny woke up, he saw that his mother was still on the couch. She had made a plate of breakfast for Jack, but not for Danny or Jazz.

"Oh buttersnaps, I'm sorry Danny, I was so busy cleaning up and making Jack's breakfast before he woke up, that I forgot to cook for you and Jazz" she said.

"It's fine, I wasn't hungry anyway" he said flatly. Jazz came out her room, fidgeting nervously. Danny was kind of tired of the new routine of coming out, seeing his mom, seeing Jazz fighting her anxiety, and then seeing his dad coming down and somehow managing to make everything worse before the day even starts. Danny was tired, so he grabbed Jazz's wrist and walked out with her before Jack even had the chance to ruin their morning.

"H-hey! What's the rush?" She asked, a bit puzzled. Danny let go of her wrist, not wanting to treat her like a child.

"Sorry. I just didn't wanna see dad this morning" Danny said.

"I get it" she sighed, looking down. "What are we gonna do?" she said.

"I don't know" Danny said. "I don't wanna tell anyone though". Jazz rubbed her arm awkwardly.

"We have to...this isn't normal" she said. "We have to tell someone but...I don't want to either. I'm scared. We'll get taken away, and teenagers don't do well in the system. I don't want to lose everything

we have, and I don't wanna risk being separated from you. Or risk you getting separated from your friends. Or risk CPS coming over and thinking the situation is a false alarm and we end up making everything worse..." she admitted. Danny was a bit shocked at that, but didn't say anything. She was right. These were all things that frightened him, which was why neither of them would say a word about this. Even if it got really bad.

And yeah...it got *really* bad.

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Hey guys, so I'm having a lot of fun writing this cuz like I said, I love angst, but I feel like I might be going crazy with the updates. Lmk if I'm overwhelming you all and I'll try to slow down. Also, if you're reading this, I hope you all have a great day and remember that people love you. Please drink water, and get some rest. Also, Danny and Jazz are still children, they're mature and they're teenagers, but they're still children. Of course they're afraid of all this stuff, but if you or someone you know is being abused, please don't be afraid of these outside factors. I promise, it gets better, and it's better to escape the environment than to stay because you're afraid.

# Chapter 5

*quick nsfw warning for this chapter. Nothing explicit happens, just a mini makeout session and some very brief touching, but just to be on the safe side, I put the warning*

_____

Danny should've been glad that lately his dad hasn't been hitting his mom. But that doesn't mean it's been getting any better for them. It's arguably gotten worse.

Money has always been kind of tight, but they at least made enough to get by. They had a roof over their heads, clothes on their back, food to eat, and school supplies and just a little bit of extra money for small things on the side like birthdays and such. They wouldn't exactly call themselves poor, but they weren't making enough to call themselves comfortably middle class either. They struggled every now and then. But it was a kind of struggle that brought them all closer together.

Recently, however, the Fentons have been treating their money as if it were chum change, hitting up all the liquor shops and restaurants in town. Their pantry was stocked with alcohol instead of food, and the little bit of food they did have now was the leftovers from Jack and Maddie's outings. Leftovers that Jazz and Danny were not allowed to touch.

The two of them ended up spending a bit more time in the school's cafeteria, taking whatever food they could take home so that they wouldn't go hungry. It got so bad eventually, however, that certain things in the house stopped working altogether. The lights didn't turn on anymore, the water soon declined (the filter was the first thing to stop working. Dirty water came from all the pipes for about a week before the water cut off completely) and the whole house was just a mess.

Trash littered every inch of the house now, dirty clothes were strewn around messily, odd substances were on the walls and couches and counter tops, everything was a disgusting mess and neither of them

did anything to fix it.

But why would they? They haven't even been coming home that much anymore anyway. Danny and Jazz had tried to clean the house a few times, but every time they did, they'd just come back to an even worse mess. And they didn't have time to clean up behind their parents as if they were small children. So they made do with the conditions they were in.

———

"Danny" Sam called Danny's name softly. Danny looked at her tiredly. She frowned a bit, but not out of any malice. Danny actually couldn't read her expression too well.

"Come to my house after school tonight" she said. Danny looked at her in confusion, but nodded anyway. He loved Sam's house. It's big, and fun, and it smells like popcorn.

"With Tucker?" He asked while smiling. Sam chuckled, blushing.

"No. Just you and me"

Danny tried his hardest to pay attention in class that day, but he was too caught up in his thoughts. He fell asleep a few times, and for whatever time he was awake, it felt like the sound of Mr Lancer's lecturing was just muffled nonsense.

Danny jumped a bit when someone poked his back. He turned over and saw Paulina waving a note under her desk for him, which he took discreetly.

*'Come to my party tomorrow. 6:00pm, my house, wear a costume'*

Danny looked back at Paulina in shock, turning his gaze over to Sam and then to Tucker to see if they'd been invited. They each looked

back at him and gave him a thumbs up. Great!

———

"Hey, uh, guys? I think I'm gonna spend lunch outside today, I'm just not up for the cafeteria" Danny said in a rushed voice. Sam looked confused but didn't say anything since Tucker brushed it off as normal.

"You go dude, we'll meet up with you as soon as we get our food" he said. Danny nodded and sped away as quickly as he could. Sam looked at Tucker with an expectant look, her arms crossed across her chest.

"You coming Sam?" he asked. She scowled.

"You two are hiding something from me" she said, not budging from where she stood.

"W-what!?" he chuckled, looking around nervously. "No way, why would we- what? a-and from you? Nooo" he bluffed. Sam growled.

"Spill" she said. Tucker shook his head sighing in defeat.

"Look Sam, I'll be honest, I wanna tell you. I really do. But I can't! I'm sworn to secrecy and it's against bro code to go back on my word, even to you" He explained. Sam looked almost hurt, but she sighed and just shook her head.

"I thought we were all friends. I guess now we keep secrets from each other" she said.

"Sam no, it's not that it's a secret, it's just something Danny's not ready to talk about with all of us" Tucker tried to comfort her.

"Yeah but he told you" she grumbled. Tucker awkwardly nodded, knowing she was kinda right.

"He didn't wanna tell me either. The only reason he did was because it has something to do with another secret that I already knew about"

Tucker explained. Sam looked up at him, offended.

"So you guys have been keeping even more secrets from me!?" Sam exclaimed. Tucker put his hands up defensively.

"He's gonna tell you all of it Sam, I promise! He's just not ready yet! You gotta give him time!"

"Not ready yet!? I tell you guy's everything! I'm there for you both through everything! What could possibly make you guys think that whatever it is you're hiding, I wouldn't understand? I'm going home" Sam huffed. Tucker wanted to comfort her, but he couldn't. If she was gonna be mad about this, that's on her. He can't go back on his word or Danny would never trust him again. Sam just has to be patient. He'll tell her when he's ready.

———

"So she just marched home after lunch?" Danny asked. He and Tucker were walking home together after class. Neither of them had gotten detention, thankfully.

"Yeah. She was kinda mad about our secret. She wanted me to tell her but I told her I can't. I think she feels left out" Tucker chuckled awkwardly.

"She'll be fine. I'm gonna go talk to her" Danny said. Tucker gave Danny a serious look. Every time he did that, he looked sillier than usual. Not that it was a bad thing, it's just that Tucker isn't usually a serious guy. So whenever he puts his serious face on, it's always so unusual.

"Dude. Seriously, don't go to her if you're not ready to tell her *everything*. She kinda has a right to know, and if you're not gonna tell her now, you'll only make it worse" he said. Danny looked down at the ground sadly.

"I...I don't know Tuck. I mean, I don't wanna tell her but I also kinda

feel like I should" he said.

"Do you want me to come with you?" Tucker asked. "It'll be easier if you're not alone"

Danny thought for a moment. Maybe it would be easier, but he felt like this was something he had to do on his own.

"Thanks Tuck but...I think this should be private. I'll call you after though, to let you know that I did it" Danny said. Tucker nodded and waved before he and Danny parted ways. Danny quickly ran to Sam's house, hoping he'd have the same luck with her father as he had last time.

———

"Danny!" Sam gasped, looking up at the heavy breathing boy. Danny was too out of breath to say anything, so he just weakly waved at her.

"You ok?" she chuckled. Danny chuckled too once he'd finally caught his breath.

"Ha, yeah" he said, sitting next to her on her bed. It was so soft and cozy. He had to fight himself not to fall asleep.

"Thanks for coming. I was kinda worried about you today" Sam said, looking away. He could tell that she meant it, but he felt bad when he saw the sad look on her face.

"Sam, I-"

"Danny, I wanna tell you something" Sam said, looking up nervously. "Something I've been keeping *secret"*

Danny gulped a bit, nodding in response. Sam sighed, scooting closer to him.

"I never said anything about this because I didn't feel like I had to but...I think you deserve to know" she started. She fidgeted awkwardly, fiddling with her fingers and the bed sheets.

"I...I like guys, and girls...I know I've had my eye on someone- a guy- for a while but I also know that girls are...really pretty" she said, blushing. Danny was a bit surprised by this, but he didn't see anything wrong with it.

"Wait, how did you know you liked girls?" Danny asked, a bit curious. Sam looked up at him, obviously triggered. She covered her face in embarrassment. Danny laughed.

"Oh my god wait- did you have a crush on a girl at school?" he asked. Sam threw a pillow at him.

"It wasn't a crush! It was just...an awakening" Sam grumbled. Danny laughed again.

"Was it star?" no. "Was it Jazz?" ew no. "Was it Valerie" no way.

"Was it...Paulina?"

no answer.

"OH MY GOD IT WAS *PAULINA*!?" Danny tried his hardest not to laugh, but he couldn't help it. Sam started to beat him with her pillows in embarrassment while he giggled uncontrollably until they both tired themselves out.

"I guess now I get why you hated her so much" Danny chuckled. Sam glared at him.

"No, that hate was real. She's shallow, and rude, and annoying, and I hate her. I don't like anything about her. But...she's pretty. And when I started to have those feelings for *her,* I realized that I felt that way about a lot of girls" Sam sighed. "I'm over it though, she's not my type anyway"

"What *is* your type?"

"I don't have one. I just know there's a guy I like" She answered.

There was a moment of silence between them, Danny was comfortable in it though. Their hands crept closer to one another's until Danny broke the silence, looking at her deeply.

"Sam I...I wanna tell you something" Danny said, squeezing the sheets a bit. There was a moment when the two looked each other in the eyes, a warm silence building up their ever beating hearts.

"Sam I..." Danny closed his eyes, but he didn't fight the touch when Sam leaned in closer, holding his hand.

"I really like you" he whispered. "Like, I like being your friend but I...I like you more than that too"

Sam cupped his face, leaning in as much as she needed to until she locked her lips to Danny's. Danny's eyes snapped open in surprise, could he be dreaming? But he didn't fight.

This was a touch he actually liked.

Danny wrapped his arms around the goth girl's waist, hoisting her up onto his lap so they could kiss more comfortably. It was a sweet, delicious silence between the two, their lips doing all the talking for them. They were blushing, but it was too good to stop. They both really liked this, they were a bit shy, but it wasn't the same embarrassment they'd always felt before. So when Sam slowly pulled Danny's shirt up above his belly, he almost didn't fight it.

Almost.

He blinked back to reality when he realized what was happening, and with a gasp, Danny jumped back. Sam looked equally as terrified as he did, neither of them in the touching mood anymore.

"Oh my god" Sam choked out, covering her mouth as if she'd seen a ghost. "Danny...you...you're *dying"*

## Chapter 6

Sam's voice rang in Danny's ears.

"I-it's not what it looks like, I swear!" Danny exclaimed, instinctively holding his arms out protectively as if he expected to get hit. Sam continued to look distraught, horrified by what she'd just seen.

"Danny...you're starving" she said quietly. Danny's racing heart seemed to slow. Relief slowly washed over him when he realized she didn't see. She didn't see the binder, she doesn't know.

Which means he still has to tell her...

"S-starving?" Danny chuckled weakly. "Sam, I'm fine, don't worry" he assured. Sam looked at him with an angry glare, almost like she were ready to cry.

"Danny!" She shouted. "I know what I saw!"

"Sam, I'm *fine"* Danny assured, rubbing her shoulders. But she shook off his touch sharply, still glaring. The motion spiked Danny's chest hurtfully. And the tears beginning to pour down her face only stung his heart more.

"Don't touch me" she hissed. "You're a liar!"

"Sam, I didn't mean to-"

"Shut up! You're keeping secrets from me! You're hiding things from me! What is it? You don't trust me? You think I don't deserve to know things because I'm a girl? Is that it!?" She shouted.

"Sam that's not true! I really like you, and I want to tell you everything it's just I...I'm not-"

"You're not *ready?* Even after I told you one of my biggest secrets, you're still not ready to tell me whatever it is you're hiding from me? Danny, this isn't some stupid embarrassing story you're keeping from me, this is an actual problem. Something's happening to you, something that's making you like this. And if you won't tell me, I'll

just have to find out *myself*" she grumbled. Danny looked at her sadly, defeated. It was all going so well, how could it all go wrong so fast?

Now Sam was gonna hate him, and she's gonna find out about his parents, and then he and his sister will be separated, and he'll never see his friends again and-

"Sam please, just forget about it" Danny choked out, holding back his tears.

"Danny, this isn't ok" Sam said. Danny nodded, letting his thin tears leak down his face weakly.

"I know..." he whispered. "I have to go"

_____

Danny walked in his house crying. He didn't care much for how he looked because he knew his parents probably weren't home anyway. So he let himself plop onto the couch face first, lying limply. He sobbed into the pillows, his mind too warped on everything wrong around him for him to stop. He felt the couch shift a bit as someone sat next to him, presumably Jazz. Her cool hand rubbing his back gently in circles. Danny looked up at his sister, puffy eyed and feeling disgusted with himself.

"Hey Jazz..." he said quietly. Jazz looked at him sadly and hugged him, allowing him to be weak in private, just between the two of them, until he found the strength to be strong for everyone else again. The two of them silently held each other, taking in the bittersweet melancholy of the silence.

The front door slammed open, making the two of them jump. Maddie walked inside weakly, looking defeated, and bruised...

"Mom..." Jazz whispered sadly. "You're home..."

The two looked at each other, Maddie's face apathetic while Jazz

looked disappointed. Jack walked in behind her, pushing her harshly out the way. Maddie didn't even move when she hit the floor until Jack yelled at her to get out of his goddamned way.

"What're you kids looking at? Don't you have homework or something?" Jack grumbled. Danny didn't respond, only standing up tiredly and hopelessly. He turned heel to go to his room, not having the strength to deal with his stupid parents anymore, but was stopped in his tracks.

"Where do you think you're going, boy? You're father is talking to you" Jack said threateningly. Danny looked up at his father, his eyes still puffy. Maddie and Jack had a very quick, very brief moment where their eyes looked almost concerned. Almost. Jack stomped over to Danny, grabbing him by the arm and dragging him to the kitchen angrily.

"Dad, what are you doing!?" Jazz exclaimed, standing from her seat. "Danny didn't do anything, don't hurt him!"

"Jasmine! Don't talk to your father that way" Maddie snapped, glaring at her daughter. Jazz glared right back, having had enough.

"Mom, this is all your fault!" Jazz spat. Maddie sighed, looking at her daughter with tired hatred.

Maddie slowly reached for her daughter's face, staring into Jazz's eyes expressionlessly as her hands began to wrap around the younger girl's neck. Jazz struggled to escape her mother's stone hard grip, but only made it worse as she tired herself out, unable to do anything more but shake in fear and discomfort. Maddie pushed Jasmine further onto the couch until the young girl was lying on her back, her mother hovering over her with her hands wrapped tightly around her daughter's thin neck.

"Mom...stop!" Jazz gagged, unable to breathe. Maddie lifted one hand, punching Jasmine right below her left eye before going back to choking her, harder, harder...

"Danny boy, look at you. Crying, and running to your sister. What is it? You forgot what we talked about already?" Jack asked, pushing Danny as if to test him. "Boys don't cry Daniel, especially not over stupid girls" he spat, pushing him again, a bit harder. Danny stumbled a bit, holding his hands out in fear.

"Put your hands down" Jack warned. Danny shook, tears pricking his eyes once more. He slowly, very slowly, started to lower his hands. But he was still so tense with fear, that any little movement made him bring them right back up again. Jack growled, pulling his belt off from around his waist. Danny gasped, stumbling backwards. He turned around to make a run for it, but right as he did so, he was grabbed by the wrist.

Jack flung Danny across the room causing Danny to hit his face on the floor. His nose bled out, as did his forehead. But Jack didn't show any remorse. He rested his foot heavily on Danny's back, holding him still as he began to beat him with his belt. Danny shrieked, wiggling around and even fighting back a bit.

Big mistake.

It was a simple reaction; Jack whipped Danny violently, one particular hit across his ribs scaring him so much that he caught the belt midair as it aimed for it's next attack.

Jack seemed to take personal offense to this self defense, kicking Danny in the face so he'd let go of the belt. Jack tossed the belt far to the side, continuing to beat Danny with kicks and stomps instead. It wasn't until he heard a sudden crack and the loudest scream he'd ever heard, that he came to his senses and stopped.

Danny bawled on the floor. He didn't care what his father thought was manly, he was too hurt to keep the tears at bay, even if he knew it would get him more hurt. Yet to his surprise, it didn't get him more hurt. Jack panicked, tending to Danny's wounds.

"Ah crap, I'm so sorry Danny! I didn't realize how hard I hit you!" he said, pressing a cloth to Danny's forehead to stop the bleeding. Daniel's nose, lip, and forehead, bled gushingly. His right eye was swollen shut and his cheeks were so badly pained that even the cold

air hitting him stung. His arms and legs were too sore to move, as was his stomach. Overall, he just felt like crap.

Jack checked him over, making sure nothing was broken at least. His nose might have been, but that was easily excusable. Once Danny was deemed "fine", Jack left him to the cold of the kitchen floor.

Danny wasn't angry this time though. He was right. His dad did still care about him. He may have gone crazy, but he's still there. His family isn't broken after all. It's just...different. And that's why he can't tell anyone.

———

Jasmine's scream was his wake up alarm the next day. She was looking around for Danny, it was almost time to leave and she hadn't seen him since she woke up on the couch that morning. She spent a good chunk of her time that morning covering up the bruises around her neck and eye from last night though, and she knew that if she and Danny left any later, they'd be late. And after last night, she'd rather not do anything to get their parents upset again...

Danny stirred, wincing sharply as he tried to get up. He coughed and whimpered in pain as he fought with all his might just to simply get up. Jazz felt her heart beat faster. Be it from fear, because her brother looked almost like he was about to die, or from pain because of how hurt he was and how miserably she failed at protecting him as his older sister, or from sheer *anger,* because the person responsible for all this was their own *father.*

Jazz growled, picking up Danny from off the floor and carrying him to the bathroom. She didn't care anymore if they were late. School could wait just a few minutes for her to at least take care of her hurt little brother.

"Danny, are you ok? Can you breathe?" She asked quietly, hoping her parents were still asleep. She put bandages over his bruises that

seemed to have been scraped open from sleeping on that hard floor. Danny nodded weakly, taking a deep breath and sighing heavily to show her that he, in fact, can still breathe.

"I'm so sorry" she whispered. "This is all my fault"

Danny grabbed her wrist weakly, shaking his head.

"no...'s mom 'n dad's fault..." he slurred quietly. His lip hurt a bit too much to speak properly. Jazz looked down, unable to look her injured brother in the face. She put band aids on his face to cover the cuts before she began painting his skin with some of her makeup. It looked a bit awkward, as they were a bit different in skin tone. But she knew he'd rather look a little silly than have everyone staring at him because of his bruises. Especially when both of them refused to speak about it to anyone.

"Come on, I'll buy you an ice pack and then we can go to school" Jazz said, taking Danny's hand. He was able to get up a bit easier this time, having already moved enough for his body to realize it's awake.

The two walked to school slowly. Danny could only move but so fast, and Jazz refused to rush him or leave him, so she matched his pace. They stopped by a nearby corner store, buying an ice pack and some cheap honey buns to get them through the day. They ended up getting to school pretty late. Not as late as Danny normally would before all of this started happening, but pretty late by Jazz's standards. She'd never been late before. She eyed the clock in disbelief as second period came around. She felt the world around her spin, her body feeling as though it were floating.

"I gotta go Danny...use the ice pack I gave you if anything hurts, and try to stay out of trouble" Jazz said in an almost motherly tone before backing away from him fearfully. She walked towards the girl's bathroom with her hand covering her mouth shakily. Danny wanted to follow her, to ask if she was ok, but he couldn't. She was going somewhere he couldn't go, and she was walking too fast to follow. So he merely dragged himself to class.

"And it's because of these recurring messages, that we're able to

decipher-"

Danny opened the door quietly, hoping to be as discreet as possible. Of course, that was wishful thinking when you're the kid coming in late while everyone else is already seated. Danny tried to ignore all the stares his way, sitting down shakily at his desk.

"DANNY'S WEARING MAKEUP!" Star shouted from across the room.

"NO WAY!" Paulina exclaimed, leaving her seat with a gasp. Suddenly everyone in the room was surrounding him, trying to get a good look at the boy who wore makeup to school. Lancer tried to calm his students, but to no avail.

"Wow Fentina, you really look like a girl today" Dash mocked. Danny actually felt something spike in him and he suddenly broke down crying in his seat, not even having a minute to fight the tears. He covered his face in shame as everyone stared in shock, as if they actually felt bad even though they all knew they didn't. He sobbed quietly for a few minutes before wiping his tears away and staring down silently at his desk.

"Alright, alright! That's enough" Mr. Lancer snapped, pushing his way through the crowd of nosy teens to make his way in front of Danny's desk. Danny didn't look up though, he just continued to stare down intensively at the wood of his desk, as though it were the most interesting thing in the world.

His makeup was ruined.

Mr. Lancer looked at Danny with a slight concern before sighing. Whatever was wrong, he didn't wanna put the boy on the spot for it by disturbing class. He'd talk with Danny after class, and if he didn't wanna participate today, that's fine.

"Everyone get back to your seats and let's pick up where we left off!" Lancer bossed, shooing everyone away until order was back in place.

———

The sound of the bell was one of the most magical, while at the same time, most damning sounds Danny could hear. He was glad to get out the class, but he was beyond upset that he had to spend the rest of the day in school.

"Mr Fenton, can I speak with you before you go please?" Mr. Lancer asked, his voice making no room for debate. Sam and Tucker stood behind Danny, ready to sit through whatever was about to happen with him. But their teacher simply looked up at them with a serious gaze, making it known he would tolerate no nonsense right now.

"In *private"* he added. Sam and Tucker looked at Danny worriedly for a moment before slowly leaving. Mr. Lancer sighed, looking at Danny once more. Danny was still looking down, fiddling awkwardly with his hands. Lancer knew something was up, and he was gonna get to the bottom of it.

"Daniel, look at me" Mr. Lancer said, his voice stern, but soft. Danny shook his head, tensing up a bit. "Why not?" he asked. Danny just continued to stare at the floor, unresponsively. Mr. Lancer sighed.

"Does this have something to do with the...makeup?" he asked carefully. No response. "Daniel, I want you to know that I don't care what you look like, or how you choose to dress or present yourself. But I'm worried about you. Lately, you've been acting so different, and then today you seemed to break down right in the middle of my class. I don't want you to feel threatened by me, but I want to know that you're ok" Lancer explained. Danny shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

"...'m sorry..." he slurred quietly.

"Would you like some napkins to wipe your face?" Lancer offered. Danny accepted after a moment's hesitation, wiping his face gently. He winced a few times before giving up and decided he'd rather look messy than touch his sore bruises any more. Lancer had a sharp eye though, having been a teacher for so long, and this little detail didn't run past him.

"Daniel" he said, a bit more firmly. "Show me your face"

He hoped and prayed that the boy was just acting ridiculous because he was insecure about his ruined makeup He silently wished for his student to just be acting out of some minor insecurity blown out of proportion. But his suspicion was too strong a thought to simply brush off as what he *hoped* it was.

"Tale of The Wijix- Daniel what in god's name happened to you!?" Lancer exclaimed. Danny immediately tensed, pulling his shirt over his face to cover it.

"I-it was an accident!" Danny responded, his voice a bit jumbled from his lip pain. "I-I fell yesterday" Lancer couldn't wipe the shocked look off his face. All his years teaching, yet cases like this were so rare, he'd never actually first hand witnessed it in person.

"Who were you with yesterday?" Lancer asked, calming himself as best as he could so he wouldn't sound scary.

"N-no one...just my sister" he answered. It wasn't exactly a lie. But Danny knew that if he told his teacher he was with his parents, his teacher would connect the dots. Danny hated to admit, but the man wasn't stupid. And letting him find out would be as bad as telling him.

"Your sister is Jasmine Fenton, correct?" Lancer asked. Danny nodded, feeling hopeless. "You'll be staying here for the day. I'm gonna call your teachers and tell them to excuse you from class. If I come back and you've mysteriously disappeared like you always do, I'm going to have to call your parents, Fenton" Lancer warned, getting up from his chair and leaving. And just for good measure, he locked the door.

———

"Tucker" Sam spoke sharply. Tucker flinched at her tone, knowing she was angry about something. "I spoke with Danny yesterday"

"You did? Do you know what's up with him? Cuz you saw how weird he was acting just now" he asked. Sam scowled, looking at him closer.

"I don't know what's up, but I do know that whatever that secret is you're keeping from me, you'd better tell me *now"* she snapped. "This isn't some stupid fraternity thing Tuck, Danny is legitimately in danger, and if you keep holding his secrets for him, you're a part of the problem"

"Wait, you mean, he didn't tell you last night!?" Tucker exclaimed. "He told me he was going to!" Sam shook her head.

"Tucker, Danny is literally starving. I don't know why- I know you both are the pigs of this group- but I know what I saw. His bones were practically sticking out of his skin, and his body felt so fragile" Sam explained, shaking nervously at the mere memory.

"Wait- backtrack for me- he's *starving!?"* Tucker exclaimed. Sam blinked in confusion.

"Uh, yeah? That's what I just said" she said, a bit lost.

"Danny never told me anything like that!" Tucker said.

"Wait...so then...what *did* he tell you?"

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> "Tale of The Wijix-!"
> Yes this is an actual book I'm writing. Yes I'm a sellout.
> Buy my book y'all! It's crispy with angst, and obviously, if you're reading this, you're into that kinda freaky shit you sadness sluts you ;) lol

# Chapter 7

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> Quick note, idk if I've been clear enough about this but my hints were a bit too subtle to depend on, so I'm just gonna say it. This story doesn't take place at any specific time in the show, but it DOES take place after Jasmine finds out that Danny is half ghost, but also before she finds out that Vlad is half ghost too. And just like in the show, Danny doesn't know that Jasmine knows about him yet. So keep that in mind to avoid any confusion. Also btw I have a headcanon that Jazz has anxiety and ocd and she takes medication for it but she keeps it secret from her brother and her friends because she has a control complex and she doesn't want people to know that she loses control of herself sometimes. Thanksss

Mr. Lancer came back into the room, this time with Jazz Fenton accompanying him. Danny looked at his sister nervously, a look that she shared. Lancer pulled up a chair in front of his desk next to Danny, for Jazz. She nodded politely, taking her seat quietly while looking down. Lancer took his seat at his desk and looked at the pair of teens in front of him. They both looked scared, and hurt. He didn't want to make things any worse for them, but he knew that if he didn't intervene now, there may be a time when he'd never see either of their faces again. And while he didn't particularly have any relationship with these children, he still felt a strong sense of care for them.

"Jasmine, show me your face" Lancer said, careful not to sound harsh with his stern voice.

"Sir, are me and Danny in trouble?" she asked nervously. Lancer shook his head.

"Not at all, I promise. I just want to make sure you're ok. Can you please show me your face?" he asked, a bit softer. Jasmine looked away, hugging herself for comfort. She shifted and fidgeted

uncomfortably for a few minutes, all of which, Mr. Lancer didn't break his gaze upon either of the siblings.

"I don't want to" she whispered. Her defiance surprised him, really. She'd always been one of the most obedient students in the school. But this only made him worry more. Both she and Danny were acting strangely, and no minor thing could explain this strange coincidence.

"Jasmine, I'll be patient with you, but I want to see your face" Lancer explained.

"I have to get to class" she said, shaking.

"You've been excused from all of your classes for the day"

Jasmine looked almost as though she wanted to throw up. She hugged herself a bit tighter, shaking uncontrollably. Lancer took note of the girl's body language as she began to lightly pinch her arms and chew her nails.

"Jasmine, are you alright?" he asked. "Is there something you're not telling me?"

Jasmine shook her head frantically, trying her best to stay still but only causing herself to shake more.

"I-I'm fine. I just haven't taken my medicine in a few days...I-I'm trying to limit m-my dep-dependency on t-them" she said weakly.

"medicine?" Danny blurted out. He quickly shut his mouth, realizing that this wasn't the time or place. Mr. Lancer looked at Danny in confusion.

"Right well, anyway...Jasmine, please. Just look up at me once and then you can look away all you want" Lancer bargained. Jazz sat shakily for a minute, unresponsively staring at the floor. She took a few slow deep breaths before looking up at Lancer. Mr Lancer wasn't as shocked with her as he was with Danny, as he'd already been expecting this. Plus, her face wasn't beaten nearly as badly as her brother's.

"Thank you" he said, nodding. Mr. Lancer pulled out some paper from

his desk, jotting down notes of his observations. "Do you two have any family in the country?" he asked.

"No one by blood..." Danny said dismissively. He hoped to bore his teacher enough to let them go.

"What about family friends?" Lancer asked. Danny facepalmed.

"No, nothing like that-"

"We have our godfather, Vlad Masters. But I don't think he likes us very much" Jasmine said, thinking a bit. Danny died a little inside. He couldn't blame her, she's too smart to forget her own godfather. Still, he wished he could tell her who he really is. But he couldn't, not when that would mean outing himself of his secret too.

"Alright, that's good to know" he said. "Do you two feel...unsafe, in your home?" Lancer asked. Danny and Jazz froze, shaking their heads.

"I need you two to be honest with me, seriously" he said. But still, the teens insisted that they were fine. And as much as he hated to, Lancer had to take their word for it. It wasn't his job to be doing this, and he knew full well that he could get in trouble; probably even lose his job, if he pried any further than this in his student's personal lives.

———

"He's been doing ***WHAT***!?" Sam shouted, her face immediately going red. tucker covered her mouth, shushing her frantically.

"Dude, be quiet! I'm not supposed to be telling you this, I'm technically not even supposed to *KNOW*!" Tucker whisper/yelled.

Tucker had enough of the secrets. Danny was his best friend, but so was Sam. He didn't wanna keep secrets from her when those secrets were ones that would get Danny hurt. They both knew something more was going on than Danny was letting on to, and they needed to

be on the same page so they could figure out a way to help him.

Tucker told Sam everything she needed to know. Of course, he still kept quiet on Danny's biggest secret; Danny would have to take it upon himself to come out to her, and he wasn't gonna rush the process for him. But he told Sam about Dash, how he's been touching him lately and how he's been forcing Danny to keep quiet about it. Sam was beyond livid, she was so ready to give Dash a piece of her mind. And of course, Tucker had to walk her around the school to cool her down because he knew she wouldn't hesitate to start a fight, and he didn't want her getting hurt or getting in trouble. Eventually she did calm down, and the two of them just stood silently in the hall for a bit to collect their thoughts.

"Miss Manson, Mr Foley, I don't know what's so important for you two to be in the hallway instead of class; but if you don't want to get written up today, I suggest you get a move on" one of the teachers advised snappishly. Sam glared at the floor for a moment before looking at the teacher.

"Actually, I think Tucker and I have something important to take care of"

_____

Mr Lancer got up from his desk when there was a knock on his door. Danny and Jazz looked at each other in confusion. What could be happening now?

"Mr. Lancer, I hope I'm not bothering but these students wanted a word with Daniel Fenton?" A teacher said politely, entering the room cautiously as if she were interrupting something.

"Oh, no not at all. We're just about done here, Danny, Jasmine, you two are free to go. But if there's anything you two need to talk about, I'm always available. Here's my contact information, just in case you need to reach me outside of school" He offered, handing the two of

them a slip of paper with his phone number and email. Danny and Jazz thanked him quickly before scurrying away.

"Sam? Tucker? What are you guys doing here?" Danny asked. Sam and Tucker gasped when they saw Danny.

"Oh my god Danny! What happened to your face!?" Tucker asked.

"And why does your sister have bruises too?" Sam added. Jazz quickly covered her face, fleeing from the teens to escape her embarrassment.

"Guys...this kind of isn't a good time. Me and Jazz aren't really feeling too good and-"

"Danny" Sam took the boy's hands, looking at him sadly. "Tucker told me everything"

Danny looked at Tucker with wide eyes. But Tucker whispered to him, that he didn't tell her *everything* everything. Danny sighed, a bit relieved but still nervous and uncomfortable.

"Danny, this isn't right. You need to talk to someone" she said.

"She's right. I know I promised to stay shut, but it's only gonna get worse man" Tucker said. "You don't think Dash's gonna embarrass you whether you keep quiet or not? As soon as he gets bored of you, he'll just make your life worse"

Danny shook his head, not wanting to confront any more problems today.

"Guys I'm not ready...I can't talk about it right now. It's embarrassing" he explained. Sam and Tucker looked at each other, then looking at Danny with sad eyes. "Look...I gotta go find my sister. I'll see you guys later"

Sam grabbed Danny's wrist before he could run off.

"Come to my house if anything bad happens today" Sam said softly. "I promise, I won't get mad about anything"

Danny nodded, giving her a quick hug before running off.

———

"Jazz" Danny sighed. He'd been looking everywhere for her, he felt stupid for not checking the stairs in front of the building. It was such an obvious relaxation point! But he found her now, so it's fine.

"This is it" she whispered. "They know now. I tried to hide it but I guess now the cat's out of the bag"

It was really, *really* bad timing when a cat hopped from the ground beside her, onto a trash can. The can tipped over, and while the cat safely got away, the garbage can emptied it's contents onto Jazz.

"Jazz! Are you ok?" Danny asked, helping her dust off. Jazz growled in frustration, kicking the stupid trash can and tensing her body to contain herself.

"It's not fair!" She choked. "t's not fair..."

Danny hugged her lightly, just as she had done for him last night, simply letting her cry out onto his shoulder until they were ready to go home.

———

When Jazz and Danny got home, they were surprised to see a group of strangers accompanying their parents in the living room. Jack and Maddie immediately looked at their children, wearing forced smiles in greeting. But the two siblings could sense their father's underlying anger beneath his smile, and their mother's terror.

"Are you Jasmine, and Daniel Fenton?" One of the strangers asked.

She was a tall woman with curly red hair, long legs, and a really pretty hourglass figure. She had dark skin, round lips, and her face seemed to glow. Every inch of her body was covered, but Danny and Jazz were still very much enticed by her. The woman cleared her throat, repeating her question. Danny and Jazz snapped out of it, confirming that they were indeed, the Fenton children.

"My name is Tamara, I'm here with some colleagues of mine. Now, I don't want either of you to panic, I promise we're *just* here to clear up some concerns that some outside sources have raised. But basically, we work with cps and we just want to ask you some questions. We've already spoken with your parents, and they've shown us your...*lovely*, home. This last step should only take a few minutes and then we'll be on our way" she explained. Danny and Jazz nodded, looking back at their parents nervously. Jack was glaring, out of view from the workers, and the children were immediately on edge.

"E-everything here is fine" Jazz quickly said.

"I trust your word, but its my job to make absolute sure. Come, let's go somewhere private to talk" Tamara said. "My colleagues will stay here with your parents to ask a few more questions and to just make sure that no one bothers us. Don't worry, it's completely safe" she assured, walking the two teens upstairs.

They ended up going to Danny's room, which was a relief to him. The room alone was at least a bit comforting, and he was glad he could toss his bag on the floor and plop himself on his bed. His bed was a luxury he was sure he'd taken for granted.

"So...let's get down to business, shall we?"

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> Soryy I didn't update yesterday, I was kinda busy. Also, it was my parents 10 year anniversary! I stan healthy relationships UwU

# Chapter 8

"Lets start with you Jasmine, your brother looks tired" Tamara said with a chuckle. She and Jasmine also took a seat on Danny's bed,

"Who called you?" Jasmine asked. Tamara didn't seem surprised by the question, smiling in response.

"I'm not allowed to disclose that information for safety reasons, but the person who called cares about you both very much" she answered. Jasmine sighed, looking away from the lady.

"So I hear you take medication, is that true sweetie?" she asked. Jazz nodded shyly. "That's ok, there's nothing to be ashamed of. Do your parents make sure you take it every day?" Jazz shook her head.

"Why not?" Tamara asked.

"Because they're always busy" Jazz responded.

"Do you at least have enough?"

"No, I ran out a while ago...but I don't really need it, so it's fine"

"Why don't you ask your parents for more? Are you afraid of getting in trouble?" Jazz flinched a bit at that last part, not wanting to admit to it, but knowing that that was precisely why she hadn't asked about her meds when she first ran out. Even when her anxiety attacks grew worse, and her schoolwork had begun declining in quality because of it...

"I don't want to bother them..." she whispered, a bit nervous. "They'll get mad"

Tamara hummed a bit in response, jotting something down on her clipboard.

"What do they do when they're mad?"

"T-to me?"

"Well, yes. Do they treat you differently from your brother?"

"A little..."

"Well, let's talk about you right now. Are you...happy?"

Jazz nodded frantically, looking up at the woman worriedly.

"Yes! I'm really happy here, I love my brother and I like living here. I like my school, and all my friends, and I don't wanna get taken away and put somewhere else" she said quickly. Tamara jotted more things down before looking back to Jazz.

"Sweetie, we're not going to take you away, and I promise you, you'll never be separated from your brother"

Jazz's eyes widened in surprise, she looked agape for a moment.

"R-really?" she asked quietly. Tamara nodded, taking hold of Jazz's hand.

"I promise. So you can be honest with me. You and your brother are safe, you'll never be separated, and your parents won't hear a word of what you say to me" she assured. Jazz looked at Danny, unsure. Danny was starting to feel a bit unsure himself, could they really trust what she was saying?

Danny almost wanted to tell her, just as much as Jazz did, but then what would happen to his parents? They're not like they used to be, but they're getting better. Sure, they hit him and they throw things at him and they say mean things, but just yesterday, his father showed that he cared. He apologized, he helped him, he didn't *mean* to hit him so hard.

And Danny understood why he was so mad. His father had come back from probably one of the happiest trips he's ever taken, hoping he'd see his loving family as it was, but instead he came home to the biggest mess ever. It's not his fault Maddie cheated, he couldn't have known. Or, he would've known, if Danny wasn't such a punk and spoke up about it before his dad got home. His dad must've felt like he could never be weak again, after seeing that everything he had was ripped from him. And maybe, because of that, Danny wasn't

allowed to be weak either. Allowing himself to be weak was mockery to his father who was taken advantage of. So Danny wasn't angry with his father for hurting him so badly. He forgave him, and he wouldn't mind if it happened again.

"Jasmine? Can you tell me what your parents do to you when they're mad" Tamara asked.

"Well..."

Jasmine reflected on the punishments she was faced with whenever she'd gotten in trouble at home.

*"Jasmine, stop being such a drama queen"* her mother would scold.

*"Jazz, why isn't the kitchen cleaned?"* her father would shout.

*"I-I didn't mean to fall behind I just...I'm really not doing ok lately, and I have a lot of work and homework to do"* she'd try to explain.

*"I don't want to hear it young lady. You're better than this, you're not like Danny"* they'd say.

"*Danny's doing his best!"* Jazz would exclaim. Her mother would slap her, both she and her father glaring hatefully at the then crying girl.

*"Danny's a failure Jazz. You wanna end up like him? A good for nothing weight on our shoulders? You wanna disappoint us, after everything you've accomplished?"* Her father would taunt, leaning close to her face terrifyingly.

It was like that all the time. Whenever Danny wasn't around to hear these arguments play out, her parents would badger her about her shortcomings. They expect so much from her, but when she opens up about her weaknesses weighing her down, they blow up in her face. Weakness is for losers. They don't expect she be without feelings; she's a woman after all. And women are nothing but trouble. But they won't let her fall behind just because of her feelings. They already have one child who's fallen behind.

———

"I'm sorry Jasmine" Tamara said after she'd finished writing on her clipboard. "I had no idea you were being treated this way"

"It's fine. They're just stressed lately, but they've always wanted what's best for me" she sighed.

"I understand why. You're a very smart girl, they just want you to succeed. But overbearing behavior isn't the way to guide you to success" Tamara explained. "Daniel? Can we talk about you now?" she asked. Danny looked up at her. He nodded in spite of himself, and inwardly felt himself cringe when she readied herself to write on her stupid clipboard.

"What do your parents do to *you* when they're mad? I know your sister says they compare you two. Do you think you can tell me why?" she asked. Danny shrugged, looking away.

"I dunno...they've never said stuff like that to my face before" he said. "They don't really do anything to me when they're mad" he lied.

"Daniel, you can be honest with me. I promise, you'll be ok"

"Nothing happens. My mom sometimes will have a mad face" Danny said, remembering his mother's hateful gaze. "And sometimes my dad will yell at me..." he remembered how his father would shout when he was beating him. It's all he could hear. And even when he couldn't make out what he was saying, his father's yelling was sometimes the only thing reminding him he hasn't died yet.

"Do they hit you?"

"No" yes.

"How did you get those bruises on your face?"

"I had a fight at school" my father beat me for crying.

"Do your parents know that you get hurt in school?"

"It doesn't happen much" It happens all the time, and they never do anything about it.

"Do you feel unsafe when they're angry? At all?"

"No" very.

"Do you sometimes wish you'd never been born, or like you want to go to sleep and never wake up?"

"No" a lot of the time, to be honest.

"Well that's good. I don't think this is too much of an alarming case then. I'll have to speak with my boss about this, but for now, I think we're all done"

Tamara gave Danny and Jazz a smile, getting up to go meet back with her colleagues.

———

"Why did you lie!?" Jazz shouted. Right after Tamara and her colleagues left, the house went quiet. So they knew that their parents were out at the moment. Jazz would never show hostility towards her brother while her parents were home, she'd never wanna get him in trouble. But right now, she was so angry and confused.

"What do you expect Jazz!? That I just snitch on mom and dad about everything? Do you wanna get us taken away? To get our parents probably locked up in jail!?" He retorted. Jazz growled in frustration, throwing a pillow at the wall.

"Danny we won't get separated! So why does it matter anymore!?" she exclaimed.

"Because I don't a broken family!" Danny shouted. Jazz was taken

aback by this, not knowing what to say.

"I don't want to get mom and dad in trouble...I just want things to go back to normal" he said. Jazz hugged him, stroking his hair. But Danny wasn't sad, or scared, or angry. He was just tired.

_____

Sam was reading a dark fantasy novel to get her mind away from everything that had been happening lately. She couldn't help worrying about Danny, and even Jazz, even though she didn't like the girl that much. She knew something was up, she knew they were both hiding something. And with Danny, she knew that whatever it was, it had to have been bad. But if Jasmine is also hiding something, then it must've been ***really*** bad. Sam had tried calling Danny a bunch of times, but he never picked up, and now, this was all she could do until she was level headed enough to figure out what to do.

She didn't have to sit and wait long, however. In the midst of her reading the same paragraph for the fourth time after zoning out so many times, there was a knock at the door. It was the middle of the night, her parents weren't expected to be home until the day after tomorrow because of some stupid work trip they took. Sam felt her heart race, she rushed to the door, hoping it was Danny with some lame gift to make things less awkward, knowing it would only make things more awkward. She'd kill to just steal a hug from him right now.

"Danny!?" Sam exclaimed, opening the door. But she was shocked, even a bit embarrassed, when she saw it wasn't Danny at her door, but his sister.

"I-I mean, Jasmine! Jazz, what're you doing here? It's the middle of the night" Sam asked, quickly correcting herself. She ushered the redhead inside, watching the girl closely for any indication that something was wrong. This was beyond strange.

"Danny had once told me your address...I hope you don't mind..." she whispered, looking nervous. Sam shook her head, sitting down and offering her a seat. Jazz gratefully accepted, allowing her body to rest just a bit.

"Don't worry about it" Sam said. "Are you ok? Oh my god, what happened to your head- and your face!?"

"Sam I need your help, it's about Danny" Jazz suddenly pleaded, taking the goth girl's hands into her own. She squeezed Sam's hands a bit too tight for comfort, but Sam was too focused to care.

"Jazz, what's going on?" She asked. Jazz bit her lip, squeezing her eyes shut to calm herself a bit. She took a deep breath and exhaled so she could at least speak properly.

"CPS came to our house after school..." Jazz said shamefully. Sam held back a gasp from the shock. She'd suspected that something was wrong with the Fenton siblings, but she would've never guessed that the cheery happy parents were the cause.

"Wha- huh!?" Sam tripped over her own words.

"It's my fault" she hiccuped. "I let him cry in front of dad, I did his makeup wrong before school, I accidentally washed mine off before I went to Mr Lancers room yesterday...and then when they came, I told them everything that happened to me and Danny just *lied* about everything happening to him" she was crying as she spoke.

"I was so ready to tell those people everything our parents have done, I was ready to risk it all to get away, but Danny's the one that actually gets hurt by mom and dad and he didn't even hesitate to protect them! And then I yelled at him for protecting them, but I was never mad I was just *scared*" she sobbed.

"They weren't home when I was yelling at him, but after our argument, we separated. I went to the kitchen to make dinner for all of us, he was in his room, and that's when they got back" Jazz explained. "My mom didn't say anything to me, she just pushed me out of her way so she could get her drinks. I saw my dad heading upstairs, and I knew he was looking for Danny, to hurt him. And I

had had enough"

*"Dad if you go up there and hurt my brother, I'm gonna call the cops on you!" Jasmine shouted.*

*"Jasmine! That is absolutely no way to talk to your father" her mother scolded.*

*"Shut up mom! What you did to dad was no way to treat your husband! What you let your side men do to Danny was no way to treat your son! And what you two do to us is no way to treat your children!" Jazz screamed, her throat scratching by how raw her voice was. Maddie cracked the newly open wine glass over her daughters head, red liquid spilling down the red haired girls face. She couldn't tell if the trickling liquid was blood, or cheap wine. But she didn't care.*

*"You're the reason this family is torn apart mom! You and dad are what ruined the Fentons, not Danny! Danny may not be good in school, or at sports, but he'd never hurt his family like you did! You're both failures for parents!" And I won't let you hurt my little brother anymore! Jazz screamed. Maddie was about to toss another bottle at her daughter, but was forcefully pushed aside by Jack.*

*Jazz, though definitely terrified of her father who towered over her greatly, didn't drop her hateful glare. The hate she wore on her face reflected the hate she wore in her heart. After everything her parents have done, she could never forgive them. All she cares about now, is protecting the one family member left who cares about her.*

*Jack grabbed a fistful of Jasmines hair from the scalp, lifting her up and slamming her into a nearby wall. She shrieked a bit in pain and surprise, but growled in defiance. She wasn't their good little daughter anymore.*

*"You don't get to talk about your mother and I like that! You're a child! You're only good for your grades. You don't have any real talents, or hobbies, or friends, or even any real strength Jasmine. When you were a baby, who fed you, and clothed you, and gave you a home and love and everything else you could ever want and need? When you started growing up and needing therapy, who paid for your sessions, and your*

*medications, and all your stupid journals and stress toys!? IT WAS US! YOUR PARENTS!" Jack shouted, repeatedly slamming her into the wall. Jazz couldn't help but cry now. The pain was too much, and hearing her own father shove her mental shortcomings in her face was unbearable, even if she knew he would probably have done that sooner or later.*

*Jack shook her like a ragdoll by the hair, just a bit for good measure, Jasmine was rendered a sobbing mess. Albeit, she was still angry, and hateful, but she was too weak to do anything about it. Her father had grown tired of hurting his daughter, finding no pleasure in taking his anger out on his eldest whom he considered superior in comparison to her brother. So with no further torment, he tossed her limp body outside, making good sure to lock the door and the windows so she couldn't come back inside.*

"Oh my god...Jasmine I'm so sorry" Sam said softly, covering her mouth. Hearing the girls story at least gave her some clarity as to what was going on, but it didn't make anything better whatsoever. Sam gasped, grabbing hold of Jasmine's upper arms in frantic worry.

"Jasmine, *what. happened. to. Danny?"* She asked, her voice panicked.

"I-I don't know...I came to use your phone to call someone so I could ask for help. I guess I also came here because you're Danny's friend, and I wanted you to know what's happening, but I don't know what happened to him after I was kicked out last night. I spent hours trying to get back inside, but everything was locked. The doors, the windows, everything. I even climbed a tree to see if I could catch a glimpse of Danny's room, but there was a curtain covering the window!" Jazz explained. Sam loosened her grip on the girl's arms, shakily holding herself for comfort instead. She tried to push back the tears that threatened to fall but...

Jazz took the goth teen into her arms, holding her the way she longed to hold Danny again. They took comfort in holding each other, shedding tears of hurt and worry and fear together in silence.

**Notes for the Chapter:**

Ok so this chapter is kinda short but I swEAR IM NOT BEING LAZY! I'm actually really excited cuz mr daddy masters is boutta come innnnn
yeah hes kinda a big deal which is why i decided id cut this short so that the next chapter could be a bit more...dramatic

# Chapter 9

Hi guys, so I wanted to make an authors note (something I never thought I'd do) because I need to make an announcement.

I'm putting this story on a temporary hiatus (and when I say temporary, I actually mean temporary). I promise, I'm not abandoning this work, I think this story is really fun to write, and I like where I'm going with it. But recently, I've had an experience with abuse of a loved one, and I was firsthand witnessing it. All is well now, but things are a bit rough right now, and I feel a little sensitive thinking about it, so I need a break from writing about these things. I feel really bad because I've always known the seriousness of abuse and trauma, and I am a victim of abuse too, but of a different TYPE of abuse. I can never begin to understand the pain that this person I care so much about has gone through. And it absolutely broke my heart to see them getting hurt the way they did. I did what I could to get them away so they could be safe, but I still need time because while things are getting better, they're still rough, and I still feel shaken.

I project a lot of myself onto how I write Jasmine as a character. I'm not being abused at home, my home life is actually a type of luxury that most people my age, unfortunately, do not get. But I do struggle from anxiety, and I believe I have control issues like her and if I'm not in control, or if I don't meet my own expectations, or I don't have absolute knowledge of how to handle a situation, I either break down, or I get angry. I'm working on myself, and I'm growing to be able to control this more than it controls me, but I like projecting my weaknesses and insecurities onto her because it helps me abandon them. It feels like once I dump my baggage onto the characters I write, I'm able to actually move on from it. But it's because of this personal connection I have to her character and my writing, that makes me unable to continue for at least a few days.

When I introduced the idea that Jasmine suffers because she feels unable to help her brother who she knows is being much more severely abused than she is, I wrote it solely because I thought that would be an interesting plot point. But now it feels like it hits too

close to home, and I can't bear to think about it. I had to sit there and watch my loved one get hurt, and it was the most painful thing I ever had to experience in my life because I care about them so much. They were there for me when I was in an abusive relationship with my ex, and they stayed with me through all my highs and lows. They made me happy, they helped me become who I am now, and even though I still struggle with mental issues, I feel like I am so much more in control than I've ever been. And my happiness isn't dependent on them like it has been for other toxic people in my life, my happiness is mine, and they just happen to contribute greatly to it.

It makes me so utterly hurt that when they were there for me in my time of need, I couldn't do more for them in their time of need. I'm doing everything I can to at least keep them as safe as possible; I told them to come to my house whenever something bad like that happens, and if anyone has a problem with it, they have my number and both my parents numbers, we will gladly talk with them. And while I can't get into detail, I just wish there was more I can do. I hate seeing them hurt like this, I love them so much and I feel like its all my fault. Their family hates us because we're gay, and they would never take it out on me because they don't want issues with my family (we're very classy and gentle, but we have a history of being fighters, and we have a LOT of friends), so instead they take it out on my loved one because they can.

I'm sorry for the rant, I know its probably weird and wrong to dump my personal baggage so directly onto a story that I'm sure most of you started reading just for the fun of it. But yeah, that's why I won't be updating for a while. But trust me when I say that I WILL be back, I promise! The first draft for the next chapter is already written, I just need to finish it and then fix it and it'll be published as soon as I'm ready. And when that happens, I'll go back to consistent posting. Thank you all for reading so far, and I really hope you look forward to what comes next

# Chapter 10

**Notes for the Chapter:**

DADDY VLADDYYYYYY

After letting Jazz use the phone in one of the rooms, Sam decided she'd let Jazz stay for as long as she needed. Her parents would probably love the red headed nerd anyway, so she didn't have to worry about getting in trouble.

"All done?" she asked.

"Yeah, thanks Sam" Jazz responded. Sam nodded, grabbing Jazz's wrist lightly.

"C'mon, I gotta fix up your head. I'm no medical expert, but we should at least cover it up so it doesn't get infected before you go see a doctor" Sam said. "I've also got some food if you're hungry. I kinda figure you, uh, haven't had dinner yet" Sam added, not wanting to be *too* forward. If Danny was a sack of bones, she could only imagine what his sister was like under *her* shirt. But there was no way she was gonna ask to see. It wasn't her business anyway.

"Thanks but...I'm not really hungry" Jazz whispered, looking down. Sam frowned, but didn't press any further. She knew that in this situation, there wasn't any mental space for an appetite. Right now, she was more worried about that wound.

Sam led Jazz to the nearest bathroom, pulling out a large first aid kit. She very easily could've called in a maid to tend to Jasmine's wounds, someone who would probably do a much better job than Sam knew how to do. But she knew that Jazz probably wouldn't wanna be handled by a stranger after what had just happened to her. So Sam just stuck to what she knew and did the best job she could.

She washed her hands before doing anything, not wanting to spread any bacteria. Then she grabbed a rag from one of the cabinets and soaked it in water, wringing it out before using it to clean up the dried blood that had stuck to Jazz's face and hair. It was sticky, and

hard to fully wash out, but she at least got out enough so that the hair wasn't practically glued in clumps by the dried red liquid. Jazz winced at first, but slowly overcame the initial pain of the touch.

"I'm gonna disinfect the open wound...this might sting a little" Sam warned. "Just...try not to move. You don't want any alcohol getting in your eyes or anything". Jazz nodded, tensing up in anticipation.

Sam poured alcohol on the rag she'd just used, lightly cleaning over the areas on Jazz's head and face that were open. Jazz hissed in pain, but didn't move. Sam made sure to be as quick and gentle as she could with her cleaning, so as to spare the girl any unnecessary pain. The cuts were deep, but Sam didn't know what else to do. They were clean, they were disinfected, all she could do now was lather them with cream and wrap them in gauze. She hoped this would at least be enough until Jazz could go to a real hospital.

"There...that's the best I can do. How's it feel?" Sam asked.

"It still kinda stings, but I guess its nice that my hair isn't sticky anymore" Jazz said.

"I know things are scary for your brother right now but I promise, speaking from experience, Danny is one of the strongest guys I have ever met. He's been through so much, I know he'll get through this too. It may not seem like it now, but everything's gonna be ok" Sam assured, touching Jasmine's shoulder. Jazz smiled weakly in response.

"Thanks..." she whispered.

"C'mon, let's go get some sleep" Sam said, standing up.

_____

Danny had no way of knowing whether he were alive or if he were dead. Every inch of his body felt as though they were screaming in the color red. He wasn't bleeding...or maybe he was and he just didn't

know. His arms were crushed, his legs felt as though they were broken, and his breath was so thin, it almost felt as though he were gasping through a cheap straw. Even down to his hands, every inch of his fingers were disgustingly swollen and his nails were ripped apart painfully. Danny would've been ashamed by how pathetic he may have looked, but it felt difficult to even keep coherent thoughts consistent without his head buzzing with pain.

"Look at you...I know this isn't fun for you Daniel, so why do you stay trapped like this?"

Danny couldn't speak, he couldn't move. Every inch of him was in excruciating amounts of pain, too much for him to even slightly move from the position he was currently lying in. But he wanted to. He wanted to jump up in fear, to maybe even run away right now. But more than anything, he wanted to fight. Because that voice wasn't his father's...

*It was Vlad Master's.*

_____

The phone ringing loudly on Sam's nightstand woke her with an irritable groan. She groggily picked up the annoying thing, having no energy for a phone call at 4 in the morning.

"Manson residence, my parents aren't home, call back tomorrow" Sam grumbled tiredly. She was ready to slam the phone back onto its holder before a familiar voice spoke on the other line.

"Ah Samantha, how good it is to hear from you again"

"VLAD!?" She shouted, suddenly feeling wide awake. "How did you get this number!?"

"Relax dearest, I have no intention of going after you or your friends anytime soon. I'm simply returning my niece's call. Jasmine *is* still with you, is she not?" Vlad asked. Sam groaned loudly. Of course

she'd be stupid enough to call the one person that could somehow make everything worse.

"Yeah, she's here" she mumbled.

"Excellent! Tell her to come to my mansion as soon as she feels ready and don't even bother going back to that wretched house of hers. Her brother is perfectly safe in my hands at the moment, and her parents will soon be taken care of" he explained.

"Wait, what? What do you mean *taken care of*? Vlad, what're you-"

The phone beeped a low tune, Sam froze with her hand slowly tightening its grip. He hung up on her.

Sam threw her blankets off, stomping over to the guest room where she let Jazz sleep for the night. She bust inside, startling her guest awake.

"Get dressed" she grumbled. "We're paying Uncie Vlad a visit"

———

"Remind me again how you know my uncle?" Jazz exclaimed, her voice struggling to overpower the loud roaring of the motorcycle. Sam's father had kept his old motorcycle from his glory days, and Sam had taught herself how to ride it behind her parents backs. Her father kept it for memories, even though the engine had busted years ago. But little did he know, Sam knew a thing or two about engineering, and fixed the engine in secret. So the motorcycle was basically hers, since she was the only one who rides it now.

"It's a long story" Sam responded. Jasmine clung to the goth girl in absolute terror as the two of them zoomed far past the speed limit. Jasmine couldn't understand why Sam was so serious right now, but she chose not to question it.

Each time they hit a bump, Jazz would scream into Sam's shirt,

gripping her tighter. Jasmine was ecstatic for the ride to end when Sam quickly stomped down on the breaks. She shook dizzily as she tried to stand on her own, but Sam just quickly held her up to help her regain her balance.

"Lets go" she said, not paying any more mind to Jazz as she grabbed her hand and marched to the door. Sam loudly banged on the large doors, glaring at them in anticipation for her boyfriend's arch nemesis.

The large doors opened with a loud creak, a dramatic feat that only Jazz seemed to care about as she jumped back a bit. The slender aristocrat stood before the two girls with a welcoming smile, but Sam's glare only deepened.

"Ah, my dearest niece, and my nephews dear friend. Please, come inside" He welcomed, standing aside to let them in. Sam eyed him as she entered, keeping Jazz close by the hand. Danny wouldn't let her hear the end of it when he hears that she came here without telling him, but she'd be damned if she let anything happen to him *or* his sister. Especially not after she just learned what their home life was like. She was gonna make sure they were both safe, no one was going to stop her.

"Where's Danny" Sam demanded. Vlad chuckled softly, holding his hands up defensively.

"I understand your concerns, I do. Samantha, was it?" Vlad began. "When Jasmine called me last night, I immediately contacted child protective services to ask about her case. Turns out, they had me listed as a potential caretaker for when they began investigations. But they were planning to have Jasmine and Daniel separated, since Daniel didn't make any claims about being mistreated in his home" Vlad explained.

"How could any of you believe that!?" Sam exclaimed. Jazz squeezed her hand a bit. They were going to be separated? But...the workers promised that wouldn't happen...

"Well, of course *I* didn't believe it, but *they* did, so I'm still in the process of proving that their old home is unsuitable for either of

them" Vlad answered. Sam grit her teeth.

"Why do you even care anyway? Don't you hate Danny or something? All you ever do is fight" Sam rolled her eyes. But honestly, she was curious. Vlad feigned hurt.

"Hate him? You wound me" Vlad said sarcastically. "Honestly, I don't hate him. I've always cared for Daniel and his family. It's his father I hate. We fight because he refuses to renounce his buffoon of a father" He explained. Sam grit her teeth stubbornly.

"I still don't trust you" she grumbled. "I wanna see him" she said. Jazz looked back and forth between Sam and Vlad, confused and flustered. What was she supposed to say in the midst of all this tension? But she nodded in agreeance, she wanted to see him too. Vlad sighed, nodding in defeat. He knew he wouldn't earn Sam's trust so quickly, but he will. Eventually.

"Alright. But be quiet" he said, a bit sharply. "He's resting now, his wounds are severe"

A look of worry and fear painted itself on Jasmine's face. Vlad smiled softly at the poor child, worried oh so sickly for her dear brother whom she failed to protect. He reached his large hand over, patting her head tenderly despite the daggering glare her goth accomplice was shooting at him. Much to his pleasure, his niece didn't reject the touch.

Vlad wasn't lying when he said he never hated Danny or his family. Ever since high school, he's been so in love with Madeline that he was unable to move on and start a family of his own. He knew this sort of obsession wasn't healthy, but it wasn't just because he liked her so much. It was because he liked her, and she was *stolen* from him; by someone he considered a friend, no less. He hated Jack with every ounce of his being for how he ruined him, and didn't even care. But Vlad still cared greatly for Maddie, and when he learned that she had children, he felt a kind of love for them that any father would have for their own children. Vlad knew they weren't his, but he wanted them. He wanted Maddie, he wanted her children, he wanted a happy family of his own and he wanted Jack Fenton to *rot* in his loneliness.

Vlad *would* be lying, if he said he didn't rejoice at the very least, when he learned that he'd be gaining legal custody over Jack's kids (well, Danny is still in the process, but Vlad has more evidence, money, and influence to use against the buffoon than he could ever imagine. Daniel and Jasmine were, as far as he was concerned, secure in his custody). Obviously, he was angry at what the man had done, and if he didn't have such a big name for himself, he'd have gone there and murdered him on sight for his animosity. No man raises a hand to his wife or children, no matter the situation. But to his surprise; though he was happy to finally have a family of his own, he didn't find himself wanting his long beloved Madeline to be a part of it. After hearing of the part she played in all this, his taste for her ran bitter. A woman doesn't disrespect her husband by letting other men use her body in his own house while he's away. A woman doesn't let her suitors get physical with her son. A woman doesn't make her daughter feel like she's not good enough, just to be cruel.

Vlad had fallen for Maddie for how beautiful she was, inside and out. She knew how to care for a nervous wreck like him (time changes people, but Vlad really was a strange one back in his college days. But the fact that Maddie cared for him only made her more attractive). He loved how smart she was, how kind she was, how pretty she was, how gentle, and strong she could be. He loved her, and he wanted to be the best version of himself for her because he wanted so badly for her to love him back. But after all this...she's not the woman he loved anymore. In all honesty, he *can't* bring himself to hate her as he hates her husband. But as of right now, she's practically dead to him.

Vlad brought Sam and Jazz to the room where Danny was sleeping. He had tended to his wounds as best as he could, but it would still take some time for them to heal fully, even with the healing boost of his ghost powers. Not that this was entirely a bad thing, it certainly helps his case for the boy to still be injured when the social worker comes to see him and his sister.

"Danny!" the two girls exclaimed in unison. What part of *be quiet* had he been unclear about? But Vlad didn't say anything. He understood their concern. He had reacted similarly when he found the boy bleeding out on the living room floor...

Jasmine trembled over her brother's lying body, breaking into messy tears out of the many overwhelming emotions she felt. She sobbed uncontrollably, falling to her knees in front of him. Sam was crying too, but she wasn't as much of a wreck, so she used what strength she had to comfort Jazz. Vlad decided he'd give them privacy, not wanting to watch the cry fest any longer. So with that, he closed the door and left them to hug and cry while he pushed his feelings back, composing himself so he could at least be strong for them.

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> hey yall, sorry for dumping my emotional baggage here. totally uncalled for. I know I said I'd be out for a few days, and I honestly thought I'd be out longer, but I just finished talking to someone about what happened and tbh I feel a bit better now. everything is fine now, we're still handling some stuff but gang gang. So I'm gonna write at my own pace, I'll update as much as I can, but I'll be taking occasional breaks to check in and care for my loved one. stay safe yall

# Chapter 11

(trigger warnings for self depreciation and explicit description of an anxiety attack in this chapter. Stay safe, love yall!)

Danny was sleeping, Sam and Jazz had finished crying and were sitting in the living room. Vlad had told them that it's unlikely for Danny to wake up anytime soon, but the girls insisted on staying "just in case". Vlad sighed. Teenagers could be so stubborn sometimes.

"Uncle Vlad, how do you and Sam know each other?" Jazz asked curiously. Vlad served the two girls some tea, sitting down with them.

"Well, you know your brother and his friends are practically attached at the hip" he began. "I met her and their other friend some time ago when me and your brother were having another one of our...quarrels"

It wasn't exactly a lie. Danny and Vlad had been fighting when Sam and Tucker met him. But Sam knew that Danny and Vlad had an unspoken agreement not to out one another, and she wasn't going to get in the middle of that.

"Oh" Jazz said softly. She looked down at her cup, her tired eyes going blank. Sam suddenly felt a sense of awkwardness wash over her. She came to make sure that Danny and Jazz were safe, but she knew deep down that she didn't really belong here. They all had their personal issues going on, and they didn't tell her for a reason. Sure, she was mad about it. She was gonna give Danny hell for keeping all this secret, but right now, she didn't have any right to be here. Not while Jasmine was still processing everything that was happening.

"Jasmine, would you like to stay with me tonight? Or will you be joining your friend Sam again?" Vlad asked. Jazz looked back at Sam nervously. She wasn't sure what she wanted to do.

No. She knew. She knew she wanted to stay here. Even if she knew

Danny probably wouldn't wake up anytime soon, she didn't feel comfortable leaving his side until she could see him wake up. She just didn't want to leave out Sam, not after everything she's done so far.

"Can Sam stay with us?" Jazz asked shyly, looking back and forth between Sam and Vlad. Both of them looked fairly perplexed, eyeing each other uncomfortably.

"If she wants to, I don't see why not" Vlad sighed. Jazz smiled, looking at Sam who just nodded in defeat. If she has the opportunity to keep a close eye on Vlad while Danny rests, she'll do whatever she can, even if she really doesn't want to. "You two can share the room straight across from where you just saw Daniel"

"You should get some rest Jazz, it's only 6:30. Sorry for waking you up so early" Sam said with a sigh. Jazz waved her hand, ready to tell her that it's fine, she didn't mind. But in spite of herself, she couldn't hold back a sudden yawn that escaped her lips.

"I'm not even sleepy..." she said, blushing in embarrassment.

"Just go lie down. A lot's happened, you need it" Sam said, standing up. She took Jasmine by the hand, offering a gentle smile for comfort.

———

Danny woke up to the worst headache he'd ever felt. He tried to sit up, but his body felt as though it were screaming, and he couldn't hold back a choked sob from the sudden excruciating pain. His throat felt raw and dry, he couldn't make any noise. So he lied pathetically, unable to move or talk, and barely able to make out where exactly he is, but he knew for a fact that this was not his house. Danny held back tears, he really tried to fight it, he really did.

Boys don't cry. Boy's don't cry.

But Danny found himself sobbing silently, he felt as though he were quite literally drowning in the sadness that leaked down his face. He couldn't breathe, he couldn't move, he couldn't speak, he was rendered helpless, and his vulnerability was absolute torture. He hated it, he hated *himself.* Somehow he felt as though it were his fault that this had all happened. His mom wouldn't have cheated on his dad if he were a better son. The only reason Jack and Maddie were so busy all the time is because Danny's so needy and yet he can't even pay them back. He's not as good a scholar as his sister, or as strong minded as his girlfriend, or as passionate as his friend Tucker. He's just a nobody, a freak half ghost who can never truly belong in either world. And if he'd never been born, his mom wouldn't have wasted so much of her time on him. She wouldn't have grown tired of Jack, she wouldn't have cheated, she wouldn't have broken Jack's heart, and he would've never become so bitter. Their family wouldn't be such a wreck, Jasmine wouldn't be so scared all the time, she probably would've even been able to get over her medical issues; whatever those were. His own sister didn't even trust him enough to tell him that she's been taking medication. He must really suck as a brother. The pain he was feeling was so overwhelmingly terrible, but he felt a strange bittersweet grayness to crying out from the pain. He's so weak, so worthless, so ready to just give up, and it's almost comforting to let himself feel that way, after he's spent so long trying to be strong.

Danny was snatched from his suffocating bliss when someone walked in the room. He heard the door gently click open, he was pleasantly surprised when the door didn't creak loudly upon opening. He always hated creaky doors.

"Oh, you're awake" an unfamiliar voice said, a sort of shock to it.. It was a woman's voice. Danny didn't respond, too tired to force a nod, and too rasped to try and speak.

"I'll be back with your medicine. Your friends and my master have been waiting to speak with you, I'm going to let them in one at a time" she explained. Danny didn't respond. He heard the door click once more, so he could only assume she left. Why did everything look grey? Danny was only left to mindlessly drift away for a short while before the door opened once more, two sets of footsteps setting in;

one a light clacking sound, and the other a sharp tap sound. So Danny assumed it was the woman again, from the clack of her heels, and someone else, though he wasn't exactly sure yet who.

"Daniel"

Ah ok. Now he knows. Danny groaned lowly. After everything that had happened, who else could he have been expecting? But it didn't make him feel any better that in this state, he had to face his arch enemy and watch him somehow make everything worse.

"Could you leave us alone for a moment?" Vlad asked the woman. She obeyed rather quickly, as Danny heard the door open once more, closing behind her. Danny dreaded everything about this. He wished he were dead.

"Daniel" Vlad began again. "Can you speak?" he asked. Danny opened his mouth but made a very soft, raspy sound, as his answer. Vlad nodded, making mental note of that.

"I'll have my maid send for a proper doctor by tonight. It's too risky to move you right now, so you'll have to make do with where you are" he said. "I have a lot of questions for you, and I'm sure you have questions for me too. It's no use trying to have a conversation with you while you're like this, so we'll have to wait. But I suppose now, while you can't fight me on it, I might as well tell you some news"

Danny grimaced. Of course Vlad would take advantage of him in his weakness.

"I'm adopting you"

Danny blinked. huh?

"Well, more specifically, I'm already adopting your sister. You're still in the process of being handed over to my custody. As soon as you're able to speak, I'm going to bring the social worker over to finish the process. And you *will. not. lie* this time, Daniel. Am I understood?" Vlad asked, his voice stern. Danny pursed his lips. He still couldn't speak.

"I'll take that as a yes. You're a smart boy Daniel, I know you'll do

fine. But I need you to be honest, about everything. Your sister already told me everything that's happened. You're not going to lie to protect your idiotic father again, just to get away from me, so that this could happen to you again. Because I promise you, next time, you won't be so lucky to even be waking up" Vlad said, once again holding a stern tone to his voice. Danny averted his eyes, he'd never been looking at the man in the first place, but force of habit. He looked away knowing that Vlad was right, but hating the fact all the same.

"Your sister and friend are here to see you. Do you want to see them now, or do you want to wait until you feel better?" Vlad asked. Danny shook his head, he really wasn't up for it right now. But the movement sent a striking pain through his skull, he let out a breathy hiss of pain. Vlad quickly went to him, applying something cool and gooey to the back of his head. Danny didn't know what it was, but he was smart enough to assume it was some sort of medicine.

"I'll give you some more time to rest before letting them in" Vlad concluded. "I'll be busy for a while. Should you ever need anything, there's a bell next to you. You just pull the string and it'll ring one of the maids here. I'll check on you occasionally, so don't you worry about a thing. Just worry about getting better" Vlad said tenderly.

———

Jazz had a hard time sleeping. Sam was passed out on the bed, despite the many times she insisted she wasn't at all tired. She was sprawled out messily, and Jazz quickly threw a blanket over her to cover her up in case her uncle chose to come in. She figured the man had enough decency to knock before entering a lady's room, but she still felt strange.

It was a bit later in the day, but it felt like an entirely new day altogether. Jazz wasn't sleepy despite having been up since 4 in the morning. Of course, she knew she'd feel the effects later, but since she's up now, she decided she'd just wait till night to go back to sleep.

Jazz felt so much race through her head while at the same time, nothing at all. She felt so overwhelmed, but also blank. She stared at her hands absentmindedly.

What was going to happen to her parents? Would she ever see them again? Was Vlad going to treat them any different? Would he be worse? Better? Would he manage to get Danny in his custody too, or would they be separated? Would she ever get her medicine again? Or would she have to fight until she breaks...possibly in front of everyone? Could she ever trust anyone after how bad her parents turned on them? Would Danny still be able to see his friends? Will her brother even be ok after all this? Will he heal, or will he...

Jazz shook her head, covering her mouth to silence a sob that escaped her. She found herself stressing so much that she couldn't keep calm. All those stupid breathing exercises she's learned all went out the window. She tried to guide herself through some, but she was just so overwhelmed that she couldn't even seem to remember how to breathe, and just that alone made her feel so incompetent, so weak, so at a loss of control. She sat on the floor, hugging herself and covering her mouth so she at least doesn't hyperventilate (Vlad had enough to worry about with Danny, she wouldn't make a burden of herself). She managed to teach herself once more how to breathe, in and out slowly, after the tears began to slow. She was thankful that she were able to keep quiet, so that Sam wouldn't wake up and see her like this. She didn't know what she'd do if she were suddenly being asked "what's wrong?" or "what happened?" or "are you ok?" or any other stupid questions like that.

Jazz took a deep breath and sighed, her anxiety attack coming to an end. She got up, fixing herself up a bit, before leaving. She wandered around aimlessly for a bit until she found a bathroom. She was definitely impressed, so much so that she spent more time that she'd like to admit just staring at it. No one needs to know that Jazz Fenton stared in awe at a bathroom for longer than she's ever stared at any boy. When she finally got ahold of herself, she went in and closed the door.

She looked in the mirror, a frown forming on her face. Her hair was a mess, her eyes were redder than she could hide, her skin was pale, and overall she just looked rather ghastly. She sighed. She felt just as

messy as she looked.

Jasmine washed her face, staring blankly at the sink once she'd finished. Maybe she was just a bit tired. She certainly *looked* tired.

Jazz found herself feeling sad. A melancholic sadness that weighed her down. She thought of the fun times she had, the happy times before it all went wrong.

*"You guys don't mind that I'm...basically crazy now?" Jazz asked shyly. Jack and Maddie wrapped their arms around her lovingly.*

*"You were never crazy sweetie" Maddie said. "But we love you either way"*

*"Yeah, and you need anything, you let us know" Jack added. Jazz nodded, hugging her parents tearfully.*

Jazz hugged herself coldly. She missed her parents love. She might never get that back, and she didn't know what to do about it. With one last tired sigh, she left the bathroom.

# Chapter 12

**Notes for the Chapter:**

i love musical references

Danny wasn't sure what Vlad or the doctors have been doing lately, but it's only been two days since he woke up, and he already feels like he can at least talk and move his head a bit. His body still hurt, but hey, never better.

"Mr. Fenton?" the maid called softly as she entered the room. Despite the many times he's politely told her not to call him that, she seems to insist on it. It's probably a maid policy thing. "Are you feeling a little better today?"

"A little" Danny said. "I can talk"

"That's wonderful to hear. Mr. Masters wanted to speak with you once you were awake, should I bring him over?" she asked. Danny sighed.

"Yeah sure" he said. The maid nodded, leaving him alone once more.

_____

"Jazz, are you ok?" Sam asked. It was early morning, 7:00 to be exact. Sam was in her underwear, for the simple fact that she didn't pack any spare clothes, and she refused to ask Vlad for anything. Of course, she got dressed once she woke up. She had no shame in wearing the same sweaty clothes from yesterday. That must was the must of determination, and loyalty.

"I'm fine" she said, a bit firmly. She cleared her throat, changing her tone quickly. "What about you, Sam? How're you holding up?"

"I'm worried" she admitted. "I wanna see Danny, but I don't know

what I'd say, even now. How could he hide something like this from me...how could *both* of you hide something this important? I...I wanna say I'm not mad but..."

Jazz put a hand on Sam's shoulder, offering a sympathetic look.

"Its ok" she whispered. "I should've known better. I'm the big sister, I should've told someone before it got this bad"

"Look, I-" Sam took a breath and brushed her fingers through her hair to calm herself down. "I'm *not* saying this to judge you or anything. I get it, this was all something really bizarre and unexpected...I couldn't begin to imagine how scary this must've been for both of you but..."

"I just feel like I've known Danny for a long time. We tell each other *everything.* I'm there for him throughout everything, I just wish he would've trusted me a little more. I don't think he realizes how much it *hurts to see him like this"* She began to sob. Jazz nodded, trying not to cry again.

"I don't know what I'm supposed to think or say now" she cried. "Was I not good enough as a friend? Is that why he didn't trust me?"

"No!" Jazz exclaimed, holding Sam's hands. "No. I promise, it's nothing like that. Danny has every reason to trust you, and I know he did. He thought you were...awesome"

"He thought I was...awesome?"

"Definitely!"

"How?"

"Well..."

Jazz found herself going into detail about every little thing that stuck out to her nicely about Sam. She was surprised with herself, having to remind herself a few times that all this was supposed to be in Danny's perspective. So then...why did she feel *really* into this?

"Wow...ok, I guess he must really think I'm...something" Sam said,

blushing. Jazz chuckled awkwardly.

"Ha...y-yeah" she said. "Look, none of this is your fault Sam. I think we were both just afraid of what was happening, and we didn't tell anyone because...well...we thought- no, we *hoped,* that everything would just go back to normal if we waited long enough" she explained.

"I'm sorry" Sam apologized. "You both went through some awful things. I shouldn't have made this about me"

"It's fine. You care a lot about him..." Jazz said, fidgeting awkwardly.

"Yeah...he's uh...he's my best friend" Sam chuckled. "I think I...might really like him"

Jazz felt her heart clench, but she did her best not to show it, smiling in response.

"Oh! Really?" She asked, feigning happiness and excitement.

"Yeah" she giggled. "I hate to admit it but I...I feel like...like I want us to be something more than what we are. Like, *officially,* y'know? Everyone *says* we're dating, but we always deny it. I just wanna look Paulina or Dash or anyone else in the eyes one day and say, *yeah. We **are** dating. What're you gonna do about it?"* Sam said, passion filling her voice. She looked so much happier when she was talking about Danny...

———

"Daniel" Vlad greeted, his voice gentle. "Did you eat?"

"The maid ran off to get you as soon as I woke up" Danny responded. Vlad nodded.

"I'll be sure to have a talk with her later. I specifically told all my staff that your health is my top priority right now" he said, mostly to

himself.

"Don't worry about it. I'm not hungry anyway" he said softly.

"Daniel, you know I'm not out to get you, right?" Vlad asked. Danny didn't respond. That would've flown had he still been unable to speak at all, but not anymore. "Daniel, I'm speaking to you"

"I don't trust you" he said, his voice still quiet but holding a certain anger. "You've *always* been out to get me. And now you have me, and my sister in your hands, my parents are completely out of the picture, and you expect me to just *trust* you?". Vlad sighed.

"The only reason I was ever against you was because I was lonely and you stood in the way of what I wanted, but your father's dug his own grave and your mother isn't my taste anymore" Vlad said.

"Not that I care what you think of my mom, but weren't you *just* obsessed with her?" Danny asked.

"Yes, that was before I found out about her floozying. I fell in love with the Maddie I met in college, but time changes people, and it's time I let her go so I can change too. I certainly wouldn't want a woman who lets her own son end up on life support in one of my guest rooms. And I certainly wouldn't want to waste myself away on a man that raises his hand to his family" Vlad explained.

"Don't talk about them like that" Danny grumbled.

"I'm sorry" Vlad said. Danny was taken aback at the apology. This man was literally his worst enemy, the man that's probably caused him the most trouble. Yet he was *apologizing*? Why?

"Can you just...leave me alone?" Danny asked.

"Ok. I'll bring your sister then, she's been waiting for quite some time to talk with you" Vlad said, getting up to leave. He took one last look at Danny before he did, frowning at the crippled boy he saw. Daniel was never bed ridden in his life. This wasn't who he was. His strength wasn't just taken from him, but his spirit too. If he wanted to, he'd be fighting to get up now that he was awake. And while Vlad was very much grateful that he wasn't, he felt a twinge of hurt when he

realized just how real this situation was. If he hadn't swooped in to save Danny when he did...well, some things are better left unsaid.

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"Danny?" Jasmine called softly. Danny's eyes widened at the sound of her familiar voice.

"H-hey Jazz..." he said softly, feeling his throat clench. Jazz teared up, approaching him slowly.

"I missed you" she whispered. She began to cry, taking hold of his hand and thanking the universe that it was warm enough to remind her that he's ok, he's *alive*. "I was so scared"

"'m sorry Jazz" Danny choked, beginning to slur his words a bit. "Dad was right about me...I'm not a man. I'm a wuss. 's why I got beat up so bad"

"Don't say that!" She exclaimed, squeezing his hand a bit. "Don't you *ever* say that about yourself! Boys are allowed to be weak Danny. No matter what, you're still my little brother"

Danny hiccupped a bit, beginning to cry once more in spite of himself. He hissed a bit in defiance, wishing he could push the tears back for just a little longer, but to no avail. He shivered in sadness, and defeat.

"I'm sorry I lied" he whispered shakily.

"You don't have to apologize, I'm not angry" Jazz said. "I just wish I could've protected you"

"Even if you were there, I wouldn't have let you get anywhere near dad" Danny said sharply. There was a moment of silence between the two of them. They both knew there was nothing either of them could have done about the situation, but that didn't take away from the agonizing "what if" feeling. They wanted so badly for things to be

different, even though they knew it couldn't ever possibly be.

"Are you gonna be ok?" Jazz asked nervously. Danny forced a laugh, groaning quietly at the pain that came from it.

"I'll be fine Jazz, stop worrying so much. We're literally in a mansion, I'm pretty sure Vlad has ingredients to make one of those super sweet parfaits you like, you should live it up a bit and ask for one" he said lightheartedly. Jazz chuckled.

"Look, leave me and my strawberry parfaits alone, little brother! I'm sure if you just tried it, you'd like it" she said, a bit cheerier than before.

"Well, if you can, could you call Sam for me?" Danny asked. Jazz frowned again, only for a moment though, before slapping her smile back on.

"Oh! She's with me. She took care of me when I got kicked out the house, and she brought me here. She's really nice, I can see why you like her so much" Jazz said. Danny shot upright, screaming in pain from the action. Jazz was a mix of confused, concerned, but also amused by the weird reaction.

"O my god are you ok!?" She exclaimed.

"Ah-! Yesss" he hissed, holding his stomach in pain. "Sam's here? What a lovely surprise" He said, in his high pitched pained voice.

"You know she's gonna totally kill you" Jazz said.

"I know" he said, laughing nervously. He and Jazz just laughed uncontrollably for a minute, basking in the sheer stupidity of the both of them.

"I'm gonna go let her know you're up" she said.

"Thanks Jazz. Love you" Danny said. Jazz smiled for real this time, leaving the room feeling a bit better than she had when she came. She went back to her room, finding Sam on her phone.

"Hey, what're you doing?" Jazz asked, sitting next to her.

"I'm texting Tucker. He's worried cuz Danny and I didn't go to school for the past few days" she answered. Jazz nodded.

"Could you tell him I said hi?" she asked. Sam nodded.

"He says hi back. And he asked if you're ok too. I didn't tell him anything yet, it's not my place" Sam said.

"Oh, tell him I'm fine" she said politely. "Also, Danny's awake now, so you can go see him if you want"

"Really!?" Sam exclaimed. "Yeah! I wanna go see him right now!"

And with that, Sam ran off to go see Danny while Jazz sat on the bed, lying down exhaustedly.

## Chapter 13

"Danny!" Sam exclaimed. She was staring wide eyed at the boy; he was lying on his back on a fancy, cushioned table, tons of needles and wires sticking out his body. There were some strange machines in the room, and overall, it just looked like a hyper fancy hospital.

"Sam" He said softly. A smile crept on his face when he saw her, he didn't realize until now just how badly he missed her.

"You're ok!" she laughed tearfully. She ran up to him, giving him a big hug. Danny hugged back, not processing the pain right away.

"I was so worried, I-I didn't know what was happening, and then your sister showed up at my house and I just-" Sam was rambling before she suddenly began to cry. Danny put his hand on her cheek, staring at her sadly.

"I-I'm sorry. I'm not trying to make this about me but-" Danny wiped her tears away and cut her off.

"Sam" he said. "It's ok. I didn't mean to keep so many secrets, but I still did and I made you worry because of it. I'm sorry"

"That's gotta be the most mature thing you've ever said. Are you sure you're ok?" She asked through tears. Danny laughed.

"Hey!" he exclaimed. Sam giggled in spite of herself.

"So...what're you gonna do now?" Sam asked. Danny shrugged, looking away.

"I mean, what *can* I do? My parents are never gonna get custody again, and Vlad is basically my legal guardian now. All my relatives live outside the country, there's nowhere else for me to go but here" Danny said sadly. "I don't want to stay here, but at least if Vlad hurts me, I'll have at least a *little* strength to fight back. I'm not scared of him. I'm not scared of anybody". Sam stared a him expressionlessly for a moment. What the heck was anyone supposed to say to that?

"You know I've always got your back, right Danny?" Sam asked.

Danny looked at her confusedly for a moment before nodding.

"I think you should give Vlad a chance" she said softly. She took Danny's hand, stroking it softly. He was tense, she felt softer than she'd ever felt holding his shaking hand. "Danny, you know him better than anyone. He knows you're strong and you would never let him use you. It's why he goes out of his way to make the most complicated, most *annoying* plots to get you out of his way. So you know that he wouldn't ever try to gain your trust to use you. And you know that if he wanted you out of the picture, he would've done that while you're like this. I think he cares about you, you should give him a chance"

"I don't trust him" Danny whispered. Sam sighed.

"That's ok. I understand" she said. "Just, don't spend all your time worrying about stuff. You can call me if you ever need anything"

_____

Vlad sent one of his drivers to take Sam home, and Jazz took the ride with her to make sure she gets there ok. It was a little awkward, especially with Jazz's bottled up feelings. She really likes Sam, which is strange because the two barely even interacted before this. But she knew Sam and Danny had something going on, and she had no right to stand in the way of that.

Sam went home, and Jazz was taken back to the manor. She tossed herself on the bed, ready to sulk in her weighing feelings, but was startled out of her sadness by a knock at the door.

"C-come in!" Jazz exclaimed, sitting up on her bed. Vlad walked into her room, a cup with sweet pink sugary pastry in his hand.

"Is everything alright?" he asked. Jazz nodded, scooting over to offer him space to sit, which he accepted gladly.

"I'm fine uncle Vlad" she assured. Vlad looked at her, raising a brow.

He handed her the cup he was holding, wrapping his large hands around hers holding the cup.

"Your brother told me you liked parfaits, but you'd be too shy to ask. I want you to know you can ask me for anything, Jasmine" Vlad explained. Jasmine blushed, embarrassed and confused.

"Thank you" she whispered. She felt her sadness weaken her. She didn't have any tears left to cry, but just as her heart sunk heavily in her chest, she let herself lean on her uncle weakly. And he held her, stroking her hair as she rested her face in his chest.

———

The next day, Sam was able to go back to school. Tucker was surprised to see her, happy, but surprised nonetheless.

"Hey Sam, how's everything?" he asked. Sam sighed, hitting her head on her locker tiredly. "That bad huh? What happened?".

"Nothing *happened,* I'm just tired" she sighed. Tucker shook his head. Sam was never *just tired.*

"How's Danny?" he asked, handing her a book. He told her he'd be taking notes for her while she was gone, and he made through on that promise. She grimaced at that question, obviously not wanting to talk about it.

"Think; hospital" she grumbled.

"Oh my god that's *awful*!" Tucker exclaimed squeamishly.

"Mr. Foley, Ms. Manson, may I speak with you two in my office please?"

Sam and Tucker flinched, looking back to see who was speaking with them.

"Oh...Mr. Lancer..." Sam sighed disappointedly. Of all the times that she could have encountered her teacher, why now?

The three of them walked to Lancer's office, taking a seat just as they've done the week before when they all had that talk. It was a dreadful talk, Sam and Tucker didn't even want to accept that they were telling the teacher they hated the most about their biggest bully taking advantage of their best friend in a way he's never done before.

"Ms. Manson, I understand that under the current circumstances, Daniel couldn't come to school lately. But that's no excuse for you to be absent as well" Lancer scolded. Sam crossed her arms, glaring defiantly. Just who does he think he is anyway?

"What did you want to talk with us about?" Tucker asked, just as equally not wanting to be there, but at least being a bit more polite about it. Lancer nodded, holding his hands over his lap.

"Right, I wanted to speak with you both about the issue you brought to my attention last week, about Mr. Baxter" he began.

"You two may not know this, but for a while now, Mr. Baxter has been in the process of being removed from his home. His home life is beyond dangerous, and if we bring any misdemeanor to his parents attention, it will be the fault of the school if he's seriously injured...or worse"

Sam felt anger brimming in her, and Tucker for once felt the same antsy irritation.

"So what does this have to do with anything?" Tucker asked. "Just cuz he has crazy parents doesn't mean he gets to get away with this! Just like he gets away with *everything*!"

"Mr. Foley, I understand your concern, but all I'm saying is that, because of the circumstances, we can't get parents involved. I've already made arrangements to issue an in-school suspension for him, all of which, he will be receiving therapy and supervision so that he can't come within 6 feet of your friend" Lancer explained. Tucker glared, and didn't even care to stop Sam when she popped off.

"You think Dash Baxter has it hard!? Danny was almost killed by his own father!" Sam shouted.

"He...what?" Lancer gasped.

"Nobody cares about Dash's sob story! He put Danny, Tucker, and I through hell and back for *years* and nobody *ever* does anything about it! And finally, we come to the vice principal to tell you that he's been *assaulting* our best friend, and all you have to offer is *SUSPENSION!?"* She screamed. Tucker nodded in agreement, glaring angrily at his teacher.

"Ms. Manson, we need to do something that won't result in either party getting hurt"

"No we need to do something to bring justice to our friend! All of us have been getting bullied, but Dash took it too far this time, and he's *not* getting away with it, you know why? Because if you don't take the necessary steps to get him expelled, I'm filing a lawsuit against the school" Sam threatened.

"And for the record, I recorded this whole conversation" Tucker said, pressing a button on his pda to stop recording. Sam high fived him smugly, and the two of them left together. Skipping school was never something either of them would advocate for, but just this once, it was the most freeing thing they could do.

_____

"Daniel, how are you feeling?" Vlad asked.

"I feel like now that the pain isn't so excruciating, I can actually process just how crappy I feel" Danny groaned. Vlad sat next to him on a chair.

"I wanted to talk with you about something" Vlad said. Danny groaned. That sentence is always a one liner for bad news.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Well, now that you're well enough to move a little bit, and hold a conversation, I wanted to let you know that the social worker will be coming by later to evaluate us. I know you don't trust me, and that's fine. You don't have to trust me. But I want you to stay here. And I want to be able to trust that you'll tell the full honest truth when the social worker asks you questions. Obviously, I have your medical file listing every injury your father left you with, so there's no way you'll end up back in his custody whether you lie or not" Vlad said, adding that last part a bit smugly.

"But I wanted to ask you; why *did* you lie for your father?" he asked. Danny sighed. He was getting tired of thinking about this, but he knew he had no choice.

"I didn't want to be taken away from them" he answered. Vlad looked a bit surprised, but it went away rather quickly.

"Was this..." he gestured to Danny's injuries. "was this all something that came out of nowhere?". Danny shook his head.

"He's been beating me for a while now. But...I still didn't want to be taken away" he said.

"Why on earth would you want to stay with that man?" Vlad asked, a bit huffy. Danny glared a bit, not in the mood for Vlad's attitude.

"He's my *father"* Danny said sharply. "He didn't mean to hurt me, he still loves me, and if you hadn't butt in, he would've apologized for taking it too far". Vlad glared at Danny, a look that made the boy flinch and look away.

"You wouldn't understand. You've always hated him, you just want me to hate him too. But I can't, I love him. He was there for me every time I needed him. And he didn't start hurting me because he hated me, he started hurting me because he was heartbroken. But he always apologized for hurting me, he never meant to hurt me. He just doesn't know his own strength" Danny explained. "No matter what...that's still my dad. He could've changed if you just gave him time".

"My dear boy, whether he meant it or not doesn't excuse the fact that he hurt you-"

"I DON'T *CARE* IF IT DOESN'T EXCUSE IT!" Danny shouted.

"Well you **should** care!" Vlad shouted back, standing up. "Because if I had let you continue to make *excuses* for that man, if I had left you to wait until he *changes,* he would've killed you! And he wouldn't be sorry that he lost a son, he'd be sorry that he broke the law. Every time he apologized to you, he wasn't sorry he hurt you; if he were sorry, he'd stop! He was only sorry for himself, sorry that he was causing more trouble for himself by leaving marks on your body!".

Vlad took deep breaths to calm himself. He knew shouting at the boy wasn't going to do him any good, but by god does that boy fail to listen! He knew that Danny was going to defend his family no matter what because at the end of the day, that's his family and he loves them. But even though they may have had good times together in the past, their familial bond had broken the moment Jack and Maddie let their grown up problems directly cause their children to suffer. Vlad was disgusted by the thought, and he wouldn't lie, he still very much hated Jack Fenton for the accident all those years ago, but Vlad was willing to let that hatred go and move on if only to be there for his godchildren. Even if they hated him for being the one to cut their parents out their lives.

"I have much work to do today, so I can't come by as often to talk to you Daniel. If you want or need anything, you know the maids, and you have your bell. Just be on your best behavior, and don't move around until we say you can. Even though you may feel a little better, you still have broken ribs and a concussion. We don't want you making anything worse for yourself, so *behave"* he said.

"Yeah, yeah, no need to tell me twice" Danny said dismissively. Vlad sighed, shaking his head a bit.

"I'll come by to sit with you when the social worker gets here" He said, ending the discussion as he left.

## Chapter 14

"Man, I'm hungry" Tucker sighed. Sam slouched in her chair tiredly.

"You're always hungry" she grumbled.

"I miss Danny" Tucker said sadly. Sam nodded, looking down. "Hey, you got any snacks?" he asked. Sam looked at him with an "are you serious" look on her face.

"What?" He asked defensively. "Tucker is hungiez. Say it with me-"

"no" she said.

"Tucker-" he began.

"Stop" Sam warned.

"Is-" He continued.

"Oh my god" she groaned.

"hungiez" he ended.

"Tucker" Sam whined.

"Tucker. Is. Hungiez." He repeated.

"Ok fine! I'll go see if we have anything in the fridge, I don't really feel like cooking so just a light snack" She said, getting up. Sam wouldn't deny, the familiarity was definitely comforting. She found herself lightly smiling once more, despite how annoying this would normally be. She opened her fridge, looking past the drinks and sauces and useless stuff that's always in a fridge that no one ever eats. She pulled out a large tray with aluminum on it, curious as to what the heck it could be since they don't normally keep leftovers.

"Woah"

There was a *ton* of brownies on the tray. Tucker immediately looked in her direction, probably enticed by the smell. They smelled a little

funny though.

"Oh wow, that's a lot" Sam said. "These are probably my parents'. They always make big batches of sweets for their job, but they won't notice if we take a few".

"*Just* a few" She added, putting a few on a separate plate for them before putting the batch back in the fridge how she found it. Tucker smiled, not caring how many he got, just ready to eat something.

"Thanks Sam!" Tucker said, grabbing one off the plate when she came back. She and him ate in silence until the brownies were gone. Sam was glad she only grabbed a few small ones though, because even for a vegetarian like her, these tasted kinda off. She could only imagine how they tasted to Tucker. Or not. He ate literally anything, after all.

———

"Mr. Fenton?" The maid called softly. Danny cringed at the name. He hated being called that.

"Yes?" he asked.

"The social worker is here to see you now. She says she wants to speak with you in private before she let's Mr. Masters inside" the maid explained. Danny blinked a bit in confusion. He wasn't complaining though, he wasn't in any rush to have Vlad with him.

"Ok, I'm ready" Danny said. The maid nodded and let in a much shorter woman. Danny was a bit taken aback, she didn't look tall and slick like the cps lady he spoke with. She was short, very petite, and almost could pass as a teen if she weren't wearing that suit.

"Hi Daniel, I'm Rue. How are you feeling today?" She asked. Her voice was sweet and chipper. Danny looked at her for a moment longer before speaking.

"I'm ok" he said. She nodded, taking a seat in front of him.

"I know you probably would've wanted your godfather in the room with you, but I wanted us to have some privacy while we chat so that I know you're being honest. He's not here, so he can't force you to say anything you don't want to. You're 100% safe with me Daniel, I promise" she assured. Danny nodded.

"Thanks...I didn't really want him here anyway. He's annoying" Danny said. Rue giggled, smiling softly at him.

"Well, at least you're comfortable enough to say that about him. I think all caretakers can be annoying sometimes. Why do you think Mr. Masters is annoying, Daniel?" she asked politely.

"Oh uh, could you call me Danny? I don't really like...formality" he said awkwardly.

"Oh! Of course, sorry. Danny then" she said, correcting herself. "What do you think of Mr. Masters?"

"He's nosy, and he can be overbearing. He just hates my dad, and he's mad cuz I didn't wanna hate him for what he did" Danny explained. Rue nodded, taking some notes.

"Forgive me if this is too forward of me but...did your father do *this* to you?" she asked, gesturing to Danny's injured body. Danny nodded.

"It was an accident" he tried to assure her. She only nodded.

"I don't think it was an accident Danny...I think your father must've been really angry about something and didn't stop to think about what he was doing before it was too late" she said. Danny smiled; finally someone understands!

"Exactly! He wouldn't have done this if he knew I couldn't take it! He's actually a really good man, he never meant to hurt me. He just hits me because I'm the boy of the house, he's never put his hands on my sister Jazz" he explained. Rue looked sad, almost as if she didn't know what to say for a moment.

"Actually, Danny..." she began, looking around a bit before looking him in the eyes. "I already spoke with your sister, and she told me that before the...*events*...that happened to you a few days ago, your

father actually did raise his hands to her. You weren't there to see it, but he tossed her around and said some nasty things before he kicked her out the house" she explained. Danny's eyes widened. Jazz got hurt...and he didn't do anything to protect her?

"Danny, this isn't your fault, I promise" Rue quickly assured, looking up at him worriedly. "You understand that what happened was something neither of you could've stopped, right?" she asked. Danny bit his lip, nodding slowly. "Good. Don't worry, your sister is perfectly fine, and she still loves you very much. But we can't just overlook your father just because you two are ok now. Even if he didn't know what he was doing, even if he didn't mean it, he still hurt you really bad and he's made " Rue said. Danny nodded, blankly.

"Let's get back to our conversation. So...have you known Vlad for a long time?" she asked. Danny shrugged. He didn't feel like talking anymore.

"How would you say you feel about him? Does he make you feel afraid, uncomfortable, unsafe, or unwelcomed?" she asked. Danny shook his head.

"We used to fight a lot but I guess he's better than my dad" Danny said quietly, looking down. Rue took some notes, nodding.

"Has he ever hit you?" she asked. Danny shook his head. It was a lie, but he didn't really care. He wanted her to just leave him alone. "Do you want him to come inside now?" she asked. Danny shrugged. Rue looked a bit confused before getting up. She opened the door, welcoming Vlad inside. He politely thanked her for her service before sitting down by Danny.

"I think I'm done talking with you for today Danny, thank you for everything. I'm sorry that this is all happening, I promise it'll get better for both you *and* your sister" Rue said. "Mr. Masters, I'm going to go ahead and let the maid show me around so I can finish my evaluation and then I'll be out of your way. this would normally be a fairly quick process but...well, your home is so big" she chuckled. "I'll be as quick as I can though"

"Don't worry Miss Rue, take all the time you need. I hope you have a

lovely day" Vlad said charmingly. Rue blushed before nodding and taking her leave.

Vlad turned to face Danny who was staring absentmindedly, a sad look on his face. Vlad cupped one of Danny's cheeks, looking him in the eyes as Danny turned his head to look up at him. The two stared at each other silently. There was nothing to say, even though there was so much Vlad wanted to say.

———

Vlad was in the middle of a messy cluster of phone calls. He was simultaneously trying to tell his employees that they'll be having some extra responsibilities for the next few days until he's settled in his new life, while at the same time trying to find a babysitter and also talking with the school, all at the same time. It was a very quick system, but it worked with how much Vlad kept finding himself on hold. But he was angrily startled out of his focus when he heard a knock on his door.

"What!?" He exclaimed. His maid came inside, looking nervous after hearing her master's impatience.

"S-sir, you have guests" she said shakily. Vlad grumbled, slamming his phone down.

"I didn't invite anyone, send them on their way" he said dismissively. The maid was still standing shakily, and he looked confused, irritated.

"Why are you still here?" he asked.

"They said they're here for Mr. Fenton, sir" she said quietly. Vlad sighed, shaking his head.

"Who are they?" he asked, a bit calmer.

"They're his school friends, Samantha and Tucker, sir"

"Alright, let them in. But take them straight to Daniel, I don't have the time right now"

"yes sir"

_____

"Dannyyyy!" Sam and Tucker called excitedly. They were giggling stupidly, and Danny was more than confused at the change in tone. He was sitting, sulking in his own sadness, that this was actually pretty refreshing.

"Hey guys" He smiled. "Why are you wearing sunglasses?"

Sam and Tucker looked at each other for a moment before breaking into giggles. They covered their mouths, trying to cease their laughter, but that only made it worse as they fell to the floor in laughter. Danny laughed in confusion, wondering what the heck was going on.

"Guys, what???"

"Danny" Tucker whispered, still laughing. "We're-" he broke into laughter once more. "We're-"

"What?" Danny asked.

"Dannyyyy" Sam laughed. She was lying on her back, giggling stupidly while hitting the floor. "We're ʰⁱgʰ" Sam wheezed. Danny covered his mouth, choking on a sudden laugh that came. Sam and Tucker laughed uncontrollably while Danny held his laughter back, being the "responsible" friend for once.

"Oh my goddd" he whispered, making them laugh even more. "It's not funnyyy" he said, his voice going high pitched as the laughter threatened to escape him. He took a deep breath and covered his mouth again, staring at them with wide eyes. He still cannot believe they got high.

"You guys are gonna get in trouble" he whispered.

"No" Tucker wheezed. "No- sshhh"

Danny laughed, shaking his head in disappointment.

"You guys suck. You're both *grounded!"* He playfully scolded. Tucker and Sam were still trying to catch their breath from laughing so much. Danny was secretly happy to have his friends here, he missed laughing and smiling. It felt nice, especially after all this time of him being left to the silence of this dull room and his unkind thoughts.

———

Sam, Tucker, and Danny took the most massive nap they've ever taken, and when they woke up, they all were so much better.

"Guys, you up?" Danny asked. Sam and Tucker groaned, sitting up tiredly.

"Yeah. I'm sooo hungry though" Sam said.

"Same" Tucker agreed.

"Of course you are" Sam said.

"I can get food for you guys if you want" Danny offered, sitting up.

"Danny, lie down! You have to rest" Sam insisted, putting her hands on Danny's chest. Danny chuckled, holding her wrists gently.

"Sam, I'm fine, don't worry. I've been moving a bit more lately, I'm gonna have to get up eventually" he said.

"Yeah but you were literally on life support just a few days ago" Tucker said, taking Sam's side.

"Yeah but now I'm not. Vlad just left the stupid wiring all over me so that the social worker would feel bad" he rolled his eyes. "My ghost

powers help me heal faster, I'm still a *little* beat up, but I'm fine" Danny said, waving in assurance. It wasn't a lie, he was still a little beaten, but they didn't have to know how badly. He didn't wanna be pitied. Sam and Tucker were a bit unsure, but they didn't know anything about ghost powers, so they couldn't argue.

Danny stood up, nearly falling over in pain. He underestimated just how sore he was, and his legs were like jelly. It didn't help that he's been lying down for so long too.

"Danny!" Sam exclaimed, helping him stand. "Are you ok?"

"I'm fine" he said quickly. "I've been lying down for days straight, I'm just a little sore. I'm fine Sam, I promise. Just...gimme a minute to get used to walking again". Sam gave him a stern look, holding him under his arm so he could lean on her.

"You're stubborn and you won't rest even if I tell you to. At least let me help you walk so you don't bump into stuff" she insisted.

The three of them walked downstairs (Tucker snatched Danny and recklessly ran down the flight of stairs while carrying him, a stunt he almost died doing since Sam chased him all the way down).

"So what are we eating?" Tucker asked, standing Danny up again. Sam took her respective place under his arm, letting him shift his weight onto her like they'd done before.

"Dude you almost killed me" Danny said.

"But at least you didn't have to go down all those stairs by yourself" Tucker pointed out.

"True, you're right" Danny nodded. "I think I'm traumatized". The three of them laughed. Danny was lost in his laughter that he didn't realize they were standing right in the middle of the living space, in full view.

"Daniel!"

The three of them flinched, quickly turning around to see a very angry Vlad Masters.

"O-oh, hey Vlad" Danny chuckled nervously.

"Daniel, *what* did we *just* speak about" Vlad began, tapping his foot impatiently. Sam and Tucker smiled nervously, waiting for Danny's response.

"Don't move around..." Danny answered, looking away in embarrassment. Vlad nodded, his stern face unchanging.

"Then *why* are you out of bed?" he asked, raising a brow.

"Because I'm bored!" Danny exclaimed. "I've been lying down doing nothing for *days*. I just wanna hang out with my friends now". Vlad sighed.

"Daniel, you're still injured. I'm not saying you can't have company, all I'm saying is that you have to focus on getting better. If you don't, you'll only get worse" he said. Danny nodded, sighing disappointedly.

"Sorry" He said quietly. But Vlad could see he was still upset.

"How would you like to see my game room?" Vlad offered.

# Chapter 15

"Would you like to see my game room?" Vlad offered. Danny perked up at that.

"You have a game room!?" Danny exclaimed. Vlad chuckled.

"Of course I do. I have to keep the children of my business partners and employees busy *somehow* when we're having meetings. You know how dangerous boredom can be" he explained. Danny chuckled, nodding in understanding. He could be a real monster if he didn't have anything to occupy him.

"That sounds great" Danny said. "Oh, wait but we came out here because we were actually kinda hungry..." Danny said, a bit nervously. Vlad nodded.

"I'll go tell the chef to make something small for you and your friends to hold you all down until dinner. Is there any allergies I should know about?" he asked. Danny shook his head.

"We're not allergic to anything, but Sam is a strict vegan and Tucker is an obligate carnivore" Danny explained. Vlad nodded, looking at Danny's friends who looked away shyly.

"I'll make sure to let the chef know then. A maid will come and bring you the food when it's ready. I'll bring you to the game room to play for now" Vlad said, walking ahead. Sam, Tucker, and Danny followed behind him slowly. It didn't go unnoticed by Danny when Sam and Tucker reached for their hips with their free hands, reaching for their weapons for just in case if they get attacked while following Vlad down his long hallway. Sam was hovering her free hand over the wrist ray Danny gave her, and Tucker was lightly holding the thermos in his pocket.

The sudden tension between his friends made Danny feel a sense of dread. If they weren't here, would Vlad have hit him for not behaving? Danny shuddered at the thought. He and Vlad had fought before, but that was back when Danny knew that after the battle, he could go home and rest in a place where he felt safe, knowing he was

still loved. But he doesn't have that anymore. Danny *can't* go home anymore, and while he didn't feel in any immediate danger here at Vlad's mansion, he's still not able to feel entirely safe *anywhere*. And he knew he had people who loved him but it still hurt that two of the most important people in his life, even if he did find them unbearably embarrassing and annoying most of the time, had grown to treat him as though they hate him. The only thing Danny could do, for his own sake, was cling desperately to the hope that his parents still loved him deep down. The small voice in the back of his head seemed to taunt him though, telling him that they hate him. They've always hated him. And everyone else must hate him too, because why wouldn't they? But he pushed it as far back as it would go. It didn't feel good at all to think that way.

"You three can stay here and play. Daniel, I'm serious; I want you to sit tight and don't move around so much. If you need anything, you either wait for the maid or I to check on you, or you send one of your friends to get me. If I catch you walking around again, there will be consequences, am I understood?" Vlad warned. Danny nodded, not looking the man in the eyes. Vlad nodded, standing aside for the teens to enter the room.

"Dude, your new guardian is scary" Tucker whispered. Danny could see a smirk creep on Vlad's lips, and he scowled in response.

"I'll be in my study. Do. not. make. a. mess" Vlad warned before leaving.

———

"Yo Danny, where's the bathroom around here?" Tucker asked quickly. The maid came by about ten minutes ago to bring them their food, each of their plates being obvious enough to separate based on the vast difference in food. By now, they were all done eating, and they were satisfied enough to at least wait till dinner for their next meal. But now Tucker had his own emergency to tend to.

"Dude, I don't know, I don't live here" Danny said. Tucker and Sam smirked at him, and he face palmed in embarrassment. "Scratch that. Look, I'm not too familiar with the place. I'll help you look for it though" Danny said, getting up. Sam pulled him back down into his seat though, giving him a stern look.

"Tucker, look around the nearby area, and if you don't see the bathroom anywhere close, look for a maid" Sam said. "I'm gonna stay here to make sure Danny doesn't go anywhere". Tucker gave them both a knowing smirk before running off. It was just Sam and Danny now. Danny felt his heart beating. He knew he shouldn't be so nervous around his best friend, but...

"Sam" Danny gulped. "I...have to tell you something" he said. Sam looked at him confusedly for a moment before giving him a soft smile. She took hold of his hand and scooted closer to him.

"Danny, it's ok. You can tell me anything" Sam said. "Actually, I need to tell you something too". Danny blinked a bit, but he felt himself relax. He knew it was no good in stalling but he figured that her telling him whatever she was about to tell him, would make it easier to let his walls down.

"Can you tell me your thing first?" Danny asked.

"Well, you're not gonna like it so just listen to me fully before you freak out" She said. Danny felt a sense of dread, but nodded in agreeance. Sam took a deep breath and began to explain.

"Tucker told me about what Dash has been doing to you, and we didn't want it happening anymore, so we told Mr. Lancer-"

"You told Mr. Lancer!?" Danny exclaimed.

"Yes. Let me finish" Sam said. Danny buried his face in his hands and shook his head.

"Danny, we did this for your own good because we *know* that if you didn't tell anyone, you'd stay quiet and keep letting this happen to you. And maybe *you're* ok with sitting quietly while you let other people hurt you, but Tucker and I *aren't"* she snapped. "Danny, we

just want you to be ok. After everything that's happened, we want to be able to go back to school like normal, we don't want you to feel unsafe ever again".

"What happened when you told Lancer?" Danny asked. "Did Dash find out...?"

"No" Sam quickly said. "No one but us and Lancer knows yet. Lancer tried to play it off as cool because apparently Dash comes from an abusive house too. He was gonna give him in-school suspension. How messed up is that?" She scoffed, getting herself worked up. "Yeah, give the guy that assaulted one of your students in the school, an in-school suspension. That'll totally stop it from happening" she ranted.

"Sam!" Danny exclaimed. "I get it, Mr. Lancer is a huge jerk. What happened after that?" he asked. Sam sighed and looked at him seriously.

"I told him that I don't *care* what kind of home Dash comes from. He gets away with literally everything, but this time he went too far and there is no protecting him. I told him that if Dash doesn't get expelled, I'm filing a lawsuit against the school. Tucker recorded the whole thing, and my family's lawyers are the best lawyers anyone could ask for" Sam said, holding the same threatening tone she held with her vice principal. Danny was beyond shocked. He wasn't angry at *her,* but something in him felt angry.

"I'm sorry Danny, I know you wouldn't have wanted this to become a big deal. But if we don't make it a big deal, it won't be taken seriously. And you *deserve* to be taken seriously about things like this" Sam explained. Danny looked away, not knowing what he was feeling, but feeling something really strong.

"Sam" Danny said quietly. Sam hushed up, giving Danny her attention. "I need to tell you something important, something I've been hiding from you because I was so afraid of what you would say. It's the reason I didn't tell anyone but Tucker about what Dash did to me". Sam nodded, staring intensely. Danny took a deep breath, squeezing his eyes shut tightly.

"I'm..." his throat clenched, a sign his body gave when he was about

to cry.

"You can tell me Danny" Sam assured, holding his hand again, just as gently as she'd done before. Danny took a few deep breaths, taking in the feeling of her soft touch, but feeling too ashamed to look her in the eyes.

"I'm trans" he whispered.

# Chapter 16

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> Guys I am SO sorry, I don't know what happened but for some reason, the chapter posted while I was typing. I did not mean to do that, but THIS is the finished chapter. Stay tuned for the next one. Please like and comment, I'm an attention whore and I love seeing what you guys think. Stay safe yall!

Sam blinked in confusion, taking a moment to process the revelation.

"You...huh?" she asked. Danny gripped his head, hiding himself as best as he could.

"I'm trans..." he said again, sounding like he was gonna cry. He felt as though he would. Sam looked away for a bit, taking it all in. This wasn't a big deal, but it definitely wasn't something she was expecting.

"I see" she said, nodding. "Why'd you hide it?"

"Because it's...it's a really personal thing" Danny said. "Tucker knows but...I didn't want you to think of me as just trans, and I don't want you to judge me for it...I'm still me, I just...I dunno" he sighed.

"Danny, I don't think of you any differently just because you're trans" Sam said. "So, you see yourself as a girl?" she asked, confusedly.

"NO!" Danny exclaimed quickly, looking up at her. She flinched a bit at the sudden outburst. "No, I was *born* as a girl...I-I'm a *guy"* . Sam nodded.

"Ok, then it's no different from how I've always seen you" Sam said. Danny shook his head.

"You don't get it Sam" he said, looking away nervously. "I'm a guy, but my body is still..."

"Oh..." Sam said, nodding in understanding. There was an awkward

silence between them. Right as Sam was about to say something, Tucker came back and broke the silence.

"Hey guys! Guess who just hit it off with one of the maids" Tucker exclaimed, walking in proudly. Sam glared at him while Danny continued to hold his head low.

"What'd I miss?" He asked in confusion.

"Nothing Tuck. You know it's kinda the maid's job to just smile and nod at whatever you say, right?" Danny asked. Tucker pouted.

"Aw man" he said. "So what're we playing now?"

"I'm not really in the playing mood" Danny said. Sam looked at him, concerned.

"Danny-"

"I think I'm gonna go take some medicine and get some rest. Could you guys go ask one of the maids to help me go back to my room. I'd go by myself but I don't want Vlad to murder me" he laughed. Tucker chuckled.

"Alright, hope you feel better Danny! And let us know if you need anything" he said. He and Sam left him alone to sulk once more.

_____

"Danny was acting kinda weird, don't you think?" Tucker said. Vlad sent one of his drivers to take them back home.

"Yeah, he *has* been acting weird lately, hasn't he" Sam grumbled. Tucker blinked confusedly. What's her problem?

"Did you guys fight or something?" he asked. Sam gripped her hair in frustration, growling.

"No! We didn't fight" She said. "He came out to me". Tucker looked at her with shock, now a bit worried.

"What happened" he asked, concerned. Mostly for Danny. He's known how nervous Danny was about this for years now.

"I told him about the Lancer thing, and then he told me he was trans. I was so shocked that we both went quiet, and that's it" she explained. "I didn't know what to say...of course I wasn't judging him but...I just had so many questions, but at the same time, it's like, why would you hide that? Why doesn't he trust me!? He was so desperate to keep *this* secret that he didn't want to tell me about being sexually assaulted, or being abused at home. None of this is anything I would've ever judged him for. I still don't judge him for any of it, but now I can't help wondering what the heck else he's hiding from me" she ranted. Tucker let her blow off her steam, but took hold of her hands to catch her attention when she was done.

"Sam, I know you care about Danny, and I know you want to protect him and be there for him" Tucker began. "And it's ok to be upset, you're only upset because you care. But you have to understand that Danny is his own person and it's up to him to choose when he's comfortable letting the people he trusts help him. He doesn't keep secrets because he doesn't trust you, or because he wants to keep you in the dark, but it's because he's not *ready*. We keep telling you over and over, that he's not *ready* and you take it like it's a personal attack, but it's *not"*

"I know it's not...but it just hurts so much when he's going through stuff and I can't help him" Sam said.

"He'll appreciate it much more if you leave it up to him to tell you things instead of assuming he's keeping secrets to hurt you" Tucker explained. Sam nodded.

"I hope he's not mad at me" Sam sighed. "I should make it up to him later"

"Just give the man some space. Coming out probably took a lot outta him"

———

Danny cried into his pillow. He sat in his underwear, staring at his body in disgust.

Dysphoria was so irrational. It's not a sort of distaste that can be explained. For years when Danny was little, he hated certain aspects of his body that over the years have now changed, and became new bits and pieces that irk him. His shoulders were too thin, his thighs were too thick, his body was too slender, he was irritatingly short (shorter than his own sister!), the list goes on. He's still a boy. He's still *Danny*.

He knew Sam probably didn't like him anymore. Not in the way he wanted her to at least, she wasn't the kind of person to hate someone for something like this, but she might not want to be *with* a guy like him.

"Daniel? Your friends just got dropped off. Is everything alright? That was a sudden leave" Vlad asked, opening the door. Danny flinched, covering up as quick as he could.

"A little privacy please? The least you could've done was knocked" Danny snapped. Vlad quickly turned away, giving him the opportunity to redress without being seen.

"You know Daniel...I know" Vlad said once Danny gave him the ok to turn back around. "About your little...secret"

"Oh gee, what now?" Danny groaned. "Go ahead, rub it in my face, *Danny Fenton's a fake*. You're the one who got your butt kicked by a girl" He grumbled, holding back tears. Vlad stared at him silently, sighing after a moment.

"I'm not going to *rub it in"* Vlad said, his stiff sophisticated voice not doing his use of slang *any* justice. It normally would've been funny, it'd be something Danny would tease him about. But not right. "You were a boy when I met you. And nothing's changed"

"Why are you suddenly being so nice" Danny asked, scooting away.

"Because I *never* hated you" Vlad answered. "All I've ever wanted was a way to escape my loneliness. I wanted revenge on your father for what he did to me, but you stood in the way of that. That's why we fought all those times. But now he's off to face the consequences of his actions; his life is falling apart and I didn't even have to touch him. That much is enough for me" he smiled.

"Yeah you must be rolling with glee" he scoffed. "Good for you". Vlad sighed, shaking his head.

"I'm happy now because I'm not lonely anymore. I don't *want* the things I wanted before. I just want to take care of you and your sister now" he said, taking a seat next to Danny on the bed. Danny scrunched up his face, holding back tears as best as he could. But his fight was futile when his pain seemed to pour down his face. He hiccupped, sobbing messily into his hands. Vlad pulled the boy into a hug, stroking his hair. And he was pleasantly surprised when Danny didn't pull away, but instead hugged Vlad, burying his face into the man's large chest to muffle his helpless cries.

# Chapter 17

"Hey *nerds"*

Tucker and Sam audibly groaned, turning around with visible irritation on their faces. Dash smirked, a bit surprised that the two losers of the school were looking at him like they were gonna do something.

"Where's your freak friend, Fen-*tina*?" he asked.

"He's not here" Tucker said. Both he and Sam glared at Dash, and Dash glared back threatningly.

"He's been out for an awful long time, tell him to get his butt over here by tomorrow. We've got some unfinished *business*" He warned. Tucker continued to silently glare, discreetly holding Sam back when she growled in response.

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"Mr. Fenton, there's a call for you on the main line from a Mister Tucker Foley" a maid said. Danny looked at her confusedly for a moment; Tucker would be in class right now, why would he be calling for him?

"Can I speak to him?" Danny asked. The maid nodded, handing him the phone. She left once he took it, closing the door behind her. "Tucker?" Danny spoke.

"Danny, listen" Danny was a bit startled by Tucker's tone. He sounded more serious than usual; scratch that, he sounded *mad.*

"What's wrong" he asked.

"Something happened" he said. "Sam and I wanted to keep everything that's been happening with you on the DL until you were ready, but

that's not an option anymore" Tucker said.

"What? What are you-"

"We're filing a lawsuit against the school and you're gonna be expected to testify for us" he said bluntly. There was a moment of silence. Tucker was about to ask if Danny had heard him, but didn't when Danny spoke.

"Tucker...what happened" Danny asked, his breath hitching.

"Sam and I just got expelled"

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"Danny, can I talk to you for a moment?" Jazz asked. Danny looked at her confusedly, but nodded.

"Yeah, sure thing" he said. He scooted, offering her a seat on his bed, which she took.

"I got a call from your friends today" she said. Danny groaned. "Danny, I'm not going to drag on the things they told me, I know you don't want to talk about it, it's ok. But I want you to know that they told me everything, and I'm going to be testifying in their lawsuit. I'm going to do everything I can to support you, and them, but even though this lawsuit is about issues that surround you, I want you to know that you don't *have* to testify. You're allowed to take time away from everything to try and heal after everything that's been going on" she explained.

"I'll think about it" Danny said. "Can we keep this a secret from Vlad...at least for as long as we can? I don't want to tell him what I went through...not yet"

Jazz rubbed his back, smiling softly at him.

"I'll keep your secrets for you as long as you need me to"

Danny thanked her, hugging her tenderly. It was a short hug, having grown awkward rather quick, but it was still nice. Jazz left promptly after that, leaving Danny alone once more. He, surprisingly, wasn't sad anymore. He was just tired. So he lied down and let sleep take him.

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"Mr. Fenton?...Mr. Fenton?"

Danny woke up with a groan. He grimaced in discomfort when he realized he'd left the light on, blinding him as he opened his eyes. He blinked away the feeling and sat up, looking over at the maid.

"Could you stop calling me that?" Danny asked.

"I'm sorry, we maids aren't allowed to call our masters by their first name" she said. "Mr. Masters wanted me to come check on you. How are you feeling?"

"Pretty ok I guess. Vlad thinks he has to baby me, but I'm totally fine" he said. "What's your name? I never got the chance to ask"

"Regina" she answered with a smile. "Regina Sanchez"

"Maybe we can call each other by first names when no one else is around? I won't tell, and I like Danny way more than Mr. Fenton" he chuckled. Regina looked unsure.

"I'm really not allowed to do that..." she said. Danny sighed. "Do you need anything?"

"No. I'm fine" he said. Regina nodded.

"I'll have a talk with Mr. Masters and let him know your condition has improved. I'll be back at 6:00 to fetch you for dinner" she said. Danny nodded.

"Alright, thanks" he said. Regina bowed before she left, closing the door behind her as always. Danny sighed boredly. He never got the chance to charge his cell, and there was nothing for him to do here. So he was pleasantly surprised when he heard knocking at his window.

"SAM!?" Danny exclaimed, staring at his friend in shock. "What're you doing here!? *How* are you here? My room is at *least* on like, the bazillionth floor"

"I know! Could you let me in, I feel like if I look down, I'll die" Sam exclaimed, the thick window glass muffling her voice. Danny nodded, quickly opening the window for her. Sam immediately jumped inside, hugging Danny tight.

"I'm never doing that again" she said, shaken up. Danny rubbed her back a bit before looking at her.

"Sam, I'm so confused" He said. "And what's with all the stuff?"

Sam was holding several bags, and after she got over her shakiness she smirked.

"I raided your parents house and got back all your stuff for you" she said. "I snuck in. I was planning to just grab your spare binders and some clothes, but your parents weren't home. Surprisingly" she said, chuckling to herself.

"I brought back all your stuff. Well, not *all of it* all of it, but I brought back as much as I could carry. I got your clothes, your games, your weird toys-"

"They're not toys, they're action figures!"

"Right, whatever. I also brought you your school books, your bookbag, everything in most of your drawers honestly, and I found some weird flying board in your parent's basement. I think it's a new invention, but I took it so I could get up here. The only things I had to leave were your game consoles, your shoes, and your astronomy books"

"That's fine, I think Vlad was gonna send someone to pick up my

stuff" Danny said. "You really didn't have to do this"

"I think I'd appreciate a 'thank you' a little more than that. I know you were gonna get all your stuff back, but I wanted to get you your important stuff quickly. And I wanted to bring you the things from your room that you like, stuff so that you're not bored in here" Sam said. "I felt bad after what happened before..."

Danny looked away, not really knowing what to say to that.

"Danny, you know I don't judge you, right?" Sam asked. Danny hesitated for a moment before slowly nodding.

"I don't care that you weren't born a boy. I still like you" she said, starting to blush. "A lot, actually".

"Y-you do?" Danny asked, also blushing. Sam nodded, smiling shyly.

"Yeah..." she said. "trans or not...will you be my *boyfriend?"* Sam asked. Danny blushed, taken very much by surprise. But he nodded, knowing full well that he's liked Sam for a long time.

The two of them laughed their nerves out together, unknowingly getting closer to each other. They soon found themselves entangled in a hug, Sam's arms resting over Danny's shoulders, and Danny's arms wrapped around Sam's waist. The two locked eyes, staring at each other silently. They're official now. Neither of them knew exactly what that meant, but they knew they were happy. They shared a tender kiss.

# Chapter 18

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> I know Danny's nickname might seem a bit controversial, but I promise that he's not called Dan-Man for being trans, I wrote it as an inside joke because every nickname I use for Danny is a nickname that I'm called in real life (I didn't even realize how wrong it might sound until after I finished writing this, and I'm not sure if I should change it). But yeah, a bunch of my friends call me Dan-Man and I think it's cute. But if that name sounds wrong or offensive in context of the story, lmk and I'll change it

Danny and Sam started slow, teasing their way into their kiss. It was so warm and soft. Danny felt as though this were a dream, he almost lost himself in bliss a few times. He and his now girlfriend had parted for air, staring into each other's eyes once more. Sam blushed, looking away shyly.

"I uh, guess I should go now" she said awkwardly. "my parents don't know I'm gone, I gotta hurry before they realize I'm not in my room"

"O-oh" Danny stumbled. "Right, ok you better hurry then"

"Call me when you can" she said, leaving through the window. Danny watched in awe as she flew away. The sudden opening of his door scared him out of his daze.

"Sir?" it was Regina. "Dinner is ready". Danny nodded, closing the window and getting up.

"What are all these bags?" she asked. Danny panicked for a moment, not really wanting her to tell Vlad about what just happened.

"Uh, nothing" he said. "I'll be right down". Regina nodded, closing the door once more.

Danny quickly kicked all his stuff under the bed, choosing to deal with them later. He took a deep breath, composing himself, before walking downstairs. His body was less sore than before, it almost felt normal to walk now. When Danny got downstairs, he saw Vlad sitting on one end of a long dining table and Jazz at his left. There was some space between them, but they still sat relatively close. The table was lavishly set with plates of fancy foods.

Danny felt both Vlad and Jazz watch him as he approached them. They were probably expecting him to sit on Vlad's right hand side, but he instead chose to sit next to his sister, keeping relatively distant from Vlad.

The three of them ate in silence. Danny felt uncomfortable in the silence, but he wasn't sure how Vlad or Jazz were taking it. He wanted to break the silence, but he wasn't sure what exactly he would say. So he didn't.

_____

Danny was playing his game, smiling happily. He was so happy, more than happy, that Sam thought to do this for him. Boredom has got to be the most awful thing in the world. Danny decided he'd message his friends in game, at least until he got a chance to charge his phone.

**Dan-Man: Hey guys, sorry I haven't been online. Busy and stuff. Btw I'm only able to talk online now. I can't find my charger or an outlet, and my phone is dead**

Danny only waited a few minutes before he got a response.

**HackerMan626: Danny! It's all cool, how u been?**

**Dan-Man: Everything's been working itself out. I'm feeling better too. The whole school situation sucks though**

**HackerMan626: I know 😓 I think we got expelled because the school wants us out the picture so they can't get sued**

**Dan-Man: What happened anyway?**

**HackerMan626: Dash came to Sam and I, told us he wanted to see u, and we told him no. He started pushing us around like he always does, and Sam cracked him in the nose! Blood EVERYWHERE**

**Dan-Man: She did WHAAAAT!?**

**HackerMan626: I normally would have stopped her but he totally deserved it. Also I got it on video**

**Dan-Man: Omg really? Send**

**HackerMan626: ok**

**-HackerMan626 sent a video-**

Danny watched the scene unfold, gaping in absolute shock when he saw Sam stand up in front of Dash, who was twice her size, and smash her fist square in the nose. Tucker wasn't kidding when he said blood *everywhere*. Danny winced, rewinding the video and watching her do it again. Blood on her hand, blood on his face, blood in the air, blood trickling down Dash's face when he cupped his nose in pain. Blood *EVERYWHERE!*

**Dan-Man: Holy crap! But now something bad might happen to her**

**HackerMan626: Something bad *did* already happen. Dash ran and cried wolf, he got her expelled for fighting and I got expelled too for recording it**

**Dan-Man: I thought fighting led to suspension? And I've never heard of recording a fight being against any rules**

**HackerMan626: Yeah that's what I'm saying! Sam told her lawyers everything, they're handling it right now**

**Dan-Man: So when are me and my sister testifying?**

**HackerMan626: idk whenever the courts set the date ig. Sam and I will let you guys know**

**Dan-Man: Fun. Just what I need after dealing with family drama; legal drama.**

**HackerMan626: Think of it this way; if we can make sure Dash gets punished for what he did to you, in a way we'll be making sure he never does the same thing to anyone else.**

**Dan-Man: I know...just give me time to think**

**HackerMan626: Ok. Call if you need anything**

**Dan-Man: Thanks Tuck**

**-Dan-Man has gone offline-**

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Danny found himself wandering around the mansion aimlessly. He wanted to keep playing his game but he couldn't seem to focus without his mind moving to topics that made him nervous. Everything felt so hopeless, it's like everything is slowly falling apart. Danny just wanted to disappear.

"Daniel?" Vlad called from behind Danny. Danny turned around, facing his former arch enemy. Vlad looked so soft in comparison to how he had before everything went wrong.

"You don't look so good" he said. Danny's chest felt tight, he knew he was on the verge of tears but he didn't care.

"Vlad..." Danny whispered, nearing the man. Vlad looked at him with concern, reaching out to catch him in the case he falls. But he didn't. He just dropped his head onto Vlad's large chest as he'd once done before, standing and leaning on him lazily.

"I want it to stop" he said, hugging the man loosely. Vlad held Danny a bit more firmly, hugging him just tight enough so Danny could still break away if he wanted to.

"Stop what, little badger?" Vlad asked, rubbing Danny's back. Danny's breath hitched as he let himself cry into Vlad's chest, not caring if his tears stained. Vlad didn't seem to care either, which he was grateful for.

"*Everything*" he whispered breathlessly, beginning to sob. Vlad shushed him comfortingly, rubbing his back in circles. Danny was always adamant about being strong, putting up a front so his weaknesses could never be used against him. It's a feat Vlad always found interesting about him, and he even admired that about him. But he's not Danny's enemy anymore, he's his *family,* and he's willing to be there when Danny needs to be weak. And he'd never use his weaknesses against him, because for someone like Danny, allowing himself to be weak takes a lot of strength.

# Chapter 19

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> I know ChristianDeath666 sounds edgy and stupid but I swear I didn't mean for it to look like it's trying too hard to be spooky 💀 Christian Death is actually a goth band I really like. If there's any goths here (like, goths that are actually a part of the subculture, not goths who just like the aesthetic) you should totally listen to Christian Death cuz they slap.
> I wanted to make this a relatively lighthearted chapter since we've been having back to back nonstop agony for the characters. Don't get me wrong, I like angst, but I think it gets bland when you don't balance it out. So yall get a break for now, but prepare to suffer

Danny cried himself out in Vlad's arms, not thinking twice to berate himself for being so weak, so pathetic. Vlad continued to shush him comfortingly, rubbing his back in circles. Once Danny had calmed himself down, Vlad swept him off his feet, carrying him in his arms. To this, Danny blushed in embarrassment, wiggling a bit in his grip. But Vlad's grip was stronger than Danny's struggling.

"Stop your thrashing Daniel, I'm not going to hurt you" Vlad said.

"I don't need to be carried, I'm perfectly fine!" Danny exclaimed.

"Are you really?" Vlad asked. Danny blinked, looking up stubbornly. "Are you really fine?"

"Yes" Danny insisted. Vlad sighed.

"You're a terrible liar"

"And your face stinks!"

Vlad's eye twitched as he let Danny go. Danny scurried back up to his room, leaving Vlad to grumble in irritation. What was it gonna take

for that boy to trust him!? Vlad sighed, letting his irritations go. He just had to give him time.

"Hi uncle Vlad" Jazz exclaimed, rushing past him. "Bye uncle Vlad!"

Vlad spun around to see his niece dressed up nicely, not too fancy, but classier than usual. She seemed to be in a rush.

"Ah ah ah" Vlad quickly tutted, chasing after her. "Where do you think you're going?"

"I'm going out with some friends" Jazz said. Vlad raised a brow.

"And by *some friends,* I hope you don't mean a *boy"* He said, crossing his arms. He's getting used to being the stern guardian. Not that he particularly enjoyed it, but what else was he supposed to be to two teenagers that he was now legally in charge of? Jazz huffed a bit at his question.

"No" she grumbled. "I'm just going out"

"No boys!" Vlad exclaimed as she walked out the door.

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"And then he just- assumed I like boys!" Jazz shouted. The woman behind her desk nodded. "I mean, who does he think he is? Even if I *did* like boys, I'm old enough to date!"

"Mhm, and tell me; why does this make you upset Jasmine? Aren't you glad that someone cares so much about you after these recent events?"

"I mean...yeah, but..." Jazz looked around nervously. "I just don't know what to think. And I've just been so *angry* lately"

"It's perfectly normal to be so emotional after everything you went through. Context aside, you've been severely overstimulated, and

after how long you've gone without your medicine, I'd imagine you're going through the first stages of withdrawl. I think you're angry now because of the betrayal you went through, and because deep down you never wanted anything to change but now *everything's* changed, and all you have left is the normalcy of everyone around you, and it frustrates you that you don't fit in. You want your family to see you for who you are, but you're not ready to be yourself because you're afraid they wont accept you"

"No one can accept me. I'm a liar. I told my uncle I'd be hanging with friends but instead I'm in therapy. Most teens lie about getting into trouble, but I'm lying about not being crazy" Jazz sulked.

"But you're *not* crazy. You have anxiety Jasmine, lots of people suffer from some form of anxiety. And you like girls, lots of people like girls. They're very pretty" her therapist assured. "Jasmine, you know self depreciation is more harmful than anything, so I want you to talk with your uncle and tell him how you've been feeling lately. You don't have to tell him about the therapy, or the medicine, or even about your sexuality. But I want you to try and open your walls just a little bit, at least by next week, alright?"

"Thanks. Sorry I've been so...bleh"

"Sweetie, I'm a doctor. You're the most pleasant girl I work with. Now tell you what; since you've been going through some uncertain times, I'll cover your next refill of medicine, free of charge. You just focus on getting better"

Jasmine thanked her therapist once more before she left. On her way home she made a pit stop at the pharmacy to pick up her medicine, which she desperately missed having in her pocket.

"Your hair!" a girl behind her exclaimed. Jazz turned around to face a girl with dark skin and a lightning blue mohawk. It reminded her a bit of Ember, the way the girl dressed and wore her makeup. And while Jazz was fully aware that Ember was a ghost, she couldn't help being attracted to people who reminded her of the rocker.

"My...hair?" Jazz repeated.

"It's red! Is that natural?" the girl asked. Jazz nodded, chuckling sheepishly. "Wow, that's so cool! Can I touch it?"

"Sure" Jazz said. "Can I touch *your* hair?"

"Hell yeah!"

The two girls took a moment to admire one another's hair, and Jazz found herself blushing when the girl stared at her intensely. She's really pretty.

"I didn't catch your name" the girl said, smirking.

"O-oh I uh...didn't throw it" Jazz said nervously. The girl's unamused expression made her suddenly panic. "B-but it's Jasmine! Jazz for short"

"I'm Emily, but I hate that name. Call me Emma" she said. Jazz smiled. "Do you listen to Girl In Red?"

"Huh wha-?" Jazz stammered. "I don't know what that is"

"It's a band" Emma said. "But it's also a statement. As in, if someone asks if you like Girl In Red, they're usually looking to get your number"

Jazz's face went red, she didn't know what to say. *Wow, that was smooth.*

"Do you not roll that way? It's fine if you don't-"

"Yes! Yes I absolutely roll that way!" Jazz exclaimed, pulling out her phone. Emma chuckled, taken aback by Jazz's enthusiasm. But she took her number when Jazz recited it. This was the best day ever!

———

Danny usually knew when Jazz was home because she made enough

noise to make it known. But right now, he wished she wasn't home.

**ChristianDeath666: She's blasting music?**

**Dan-Man: Yes! Idk what she's playing cuz it's the walls muffle it out but omg it's so loud. I can feel my whole room shaking**

**HackerMan626: You should play louder music to assert dominance**

**ChristianDeath666: lmaooo Danny out here with the T pose**

**-HackerMan626 sent a photo-**

**ChristianDeath666: Lmaoooo that's @Dan-Man**

**Dan-Man: Not funny you guys!**

Danny groaned. Tucker had sent a picture of some stupid cartoon character T posing.

**Dan-Man: oh my goddd**

**ChristianDeath666: calm down Danny we're joking**

**Dan-Man: no not that. She's singing now**

**HackerMan626: is she any good?**

**Dan-Man: NO!**

**ChristianDeath666: dude ask what she's playing, I'm curious**

**Dan-Man: I'm not going in there. My head hurts**

**ChristianDeath666: Then get close enough to the sound to record some of it and then send it**

**Dan-Man: alright, brb**

Danny laughed as he stood up. He left his room and waited outside his sister's room. She was singing loudly, and honestly, it was pretty bad. Danny winced at the sound of her tone deaf voice as he recorded

a little bit for his friends.

-**Dan-Man sent a video-**

Danny went back to his room where he was safe from Jasmine's shrieking as he waited on a response from his friends. He watched the chat bubbles go up then down.

**ChristianDeath666: YOOOOOO**

**Dan-Man: ?**

**ChristianDeath666: I KNOW THAT SONG**

**Dan-Man: What is it?**

**ChristianDeath666: □□□ omggg**

**ChristianDeath666: Ok, so I'm not gonna tell you what it is, but when you see Jasmine later, ask her if she listens to Girl In Red and then lmk how she reacts**

**Dan-Man: okkk?**

Danny scratched his head confusedly, but didn't question it. Danny honestly felt like Sam and Jazz could be pretty great friends if Sam let her walls down a bit and if Jazz were less overbearing. They had a lot in common after all. But Danny wasn't gonna get in the middle of a friendship with his sister and his girlfriend, so he left it up to the ladies to figure out. For now, he wanted to know what was so funny about a girl in red?

# Chapter 20

Quick note: Big nsfw warning for this chapter; there's no explicit smutty smut, but it's still pretty descriptive implications that the nasty is happening. Also, trigger warning for recollection of sexual abuse. No sexual abuse happens in this chapter, but the memory of it is brought up, so just a quick warning. Love y'all!

———

Regina came by to fetch Danny when dinner was ready. He was so ready for this, he was gonna slip in, ask the question, and record her reaction. He didn't really understand, but he was hyped.

Vlad and Jasmine were sitting in their respective seats from yesterday. Danny walked over, taking a seat across from Jazz as opposed to beside her, so he could be in full view of her face. Both she and Vlad seemed a bit surprised that Danny would take that seat, seeing as how in order to sit in front of Jasmine, he'd have to sit beside Vlad on his right side; the very seat he refused to take before. Danny was holding in his laughter, but he was sure his shaking smirk could be seen, judging by Jazz's suspicious expression.

"Hello little brother" Jazz said, raising a brow. Danny waved, feigning innocence as she eyed him, sipping her tea. The two of them stared at each other in silence, whilst Vlad eyed them both in confusion. He didn't know them for that long, so he couldn't understand the conversations they have in silence. But Danny knew Jazz was essentially telling him to stop whatever he had planned, while Danny's smile made it known that he was fully intending on acting on his mischievous plans. Danny pulled rested his cheek on his hand, letting his wrist watch face his sister so he could record her with it's camera (courtesy of Tucker).

"Sooo...Jazz" Danny began, tapping his fingers on the table. Jazz gave him the kind of glare that only a sister could pull off. "Do you listen to Girl in red?"

Jazz immediately choked on her tea, nearly dropping the cup. She quickly put the cup down and covered her nose that was now leaking water. Her face was a dark blush, and Danny erupted in laughter. He doubled over in laughter, this was just so hilarious!

"Daniel *please"* Vlad quietly reprimanded. "Mind your manners, we're at the table"

Danny quickly sat up, covering his mouth to muffle his laughter. Tears brimmed in his eyes from the laughing, he squeakily apologized through the giggles.

"Danny!" Jazz exclaimed "Why would you think that"

"Sam told me to ask you that" Danny said, out of breath now. "She said she knew the song you were singing". Jazz blushed again, glaring at Danny.

"I don't know what you're talking about, that's crazy talk" she said "I *don't* like Girl In Red or *anything* like that".

Danny didn't really understand why she seemed so bothered by the question, but the two of them went back to eating in silence after that. After a few minutes of awkward silence, Vlad cleared his throat, grabbing both of the teenagers attention.

"So, I assume you're both well in health, correct?" Vlad asked. Danny and Jazz nodded. "Good, because starting next week, I'm sending you both back to school"

Danny and Jazz felt a sense of dread at that statement. They both knew that the moment they went back, it was bad news for Danny.

"I know you both may still be struggling to cope with everything that's happened, but you still have responsibilities. We'll spend the weekend stocking up on anything you may need or want, but after that, I expect you both go to school and do well. Alright, Daniel?"

"Why are you calling *me* out!?"

"Because I've seen your grades. There will be no failing grades anymore or else there will be consequences, am I understood?" Vlad

asked, looking at Daniel piercingly. Danny glared a bit but nodded in defeat. Vlad didn't push him for more than that.

"Right. Now Jasmine" Vlad began again, shifting focus onto Jazz. "How was your day out?"

"It was fine" she said, not wanting to talk about it.

"No boys, right?" Vlad asked. Jazz grumbled, looking away.

"*No. No boys"* she mumbled. "I don't see why that matters so much to you *anyway*"

"Because you left without even the decency to say a word to me, Jasmine! Maybe your parents were ok with this sort of behavior, but you're with me now. So I expect you tell me when you plan to go out, who you're going out with, and how long you plan to stay out. You may think I'm trying to control you, but I'm not. I just want you to be safe, and if you can't respect these rules I give you, then you can't go out" he said, stern as ever as he eyed her with sharp eyes. Jazz shrunk in her seat, crossing her arms defiantly but holding back tears. Danny was immensely uncomfortable. Vlad had a point, but it was just so insufferable to have to listen to him of all people.

"I'm going to my room" Danny said, pushing his plate in front of him. Jazz did the same, walking off at the same time Danny did, leaving Vlad to wonder where he went wrong.

His obsession over Jack Fenton is gone, his distaste for the man still strong and bitter, but his burning hatred having died when he proved just how useless he is. Useless as a man, a father, and a husband. He's not worth any of Vlad's time, patience, money, or energy, and so he gives him none. And Maddie, oh his dear Maddie; his love for the woman she used to be may never go away. And he may well never find anyone to fill the emptiness that he's felt since the day he lost her, lost everything. But his love for her was only for the woman she *used* to be. Vlad could never fall in love with her again, not after who she's become. And it hurt so much to say, but he had to let Jack and Maddie go for good. His obsession for them has influenced him enough, but in spite of what he lost or what he gained from his years obsessing over them, he ultimately must accept that he's lonely. He's

lonely, and oh so miserable. Yet ironically, the only glimmer of hope he can see is Jack and Maddie's children, children they took very much for granted, because Vlad swore he'd take care of them as best as he could no matter what. And even if they hated him forever, or if they could never trust him, he'd still love them both unconditionally. They're all he has, after all. His only purpose in life. He wouldn't hurt them like their useless parents have.

Vlad sighed, his empty heart beating sorely. He wanted something, *anything,* to take this pain away. He loved those children, but they're his hope, not his remedy. And things are too messy for him to just magically feel better. Years upon years of torment, self hate, utter loathing of a man he could never touch, and just so much darkness consuming him for as long as he can remember...it's maddening. So much so, even his memories of the days he used to be happy seem to be slipping away from him. All he has left to his sanity is the hope that maybe someday, he could have a loving family.

———

"Vlad?"

Danny knew where Vlad's bedroom was. He wasn't too familiar with all the rooms, but he at least knew where some of the main rooms were. Vlad opened the large door, revealing himself in a way that seemed to take Danny by surprise. Vlad's hair wasn't in its usual ponytail, instead falling in waves down his neck. He wore a white T-shirt and black pajama pants, and somehow he seemed to look a million times more human when he was dressed like this than when he was in that snobbish suit. Danny stared at him for a bit, a bit surprised yet embarrassed that he never saw Vlad as human as he does now. He's always known the man was human, but when you're always stripped of imperfections, it's hard to see him that way.

"Yes, Daniel? Did you need something?" Vlad asked tiredly. Danny blinked, no longer in his trance.

"O-Oh! Um...can I go to Sam's house?" he asked. Vlad raised a brow.

"Not that I think you children would do anything to be concerned about, but what do you two plan to do at this time of night?" Vlad asked suspiciously.

"She said she wants to give me the notes she took for me while I was out. She can't give them to me tomorrow because she's...going out somewhere" Danny said. He didn't want to tell Vlad that Sam and Tucker were expelled, because then he'd have to explain the lawsuit...

"Fine but make it quick. I want you to call me when you get there and show me the notes when you get back" Vlad said.

"What!? Why!?" Danny exclaimed.

"Just so I know that you got them. It'd be a shame if you went all the way to her house and came back empty handed" Vlad said. Danny blushed, sighing.

"Alright fine. I don't need a driver" Danny said, transforming in front of Vlad. The man took no surprise to the transformation, having known about Danny's secret identity for months now, just as Danny knows of his.

"Don't be home late" Vlad said. Danny nodded, phasing through the walls and flying away.

———

Jasmine felt herself shaking as she stood in front of Vlad's door, ready to knock but too afraid. She took a few slow deep breaths, prepping herself. But right as she was about to knock, the door swung itself open. Jazz flinched, yelping as she was startled. Vlad looked down at Jasmine, not noticing the small girl in front of him until she squeaked in fear.

"Ah Jasmine, what do you need?" He asked. Jazz shook a bit, terrified

but unsure of exactly why. Her eyes watered and she just stared up at the man emotionally. Vlad looked at her with worry. Had something happened? Whatever it could be, he felt a sting in his chest seeing Jasmine troubled like this. He leaned over, scooping her up into a hug similarly to how he'd done with her brother. He held her tight, stroking her hair gently. He remained stoic, continuing the action as she buried her face in his shoulder and cried.

"Dearest, Jasmine what happened?" Vlad asked softly, still stroking her hair. She sniffled, rubbing her eyes a bit.

"I'm fine" she assured. "I'm sorry"

Vlad wiped her tears away, grabbing her shoulders after and looking at her with a serious look.

"Don't apologize" he said. "I love you Jasmine, I love you and your brother very much. You might not like me or trust me, but I love you both"

Jasmine nodded, hugging Vlad once more. The two of them just held each other, not crying, not talking. Just holding one another.

"Are you ok?" he asked. Jazz nodded.

"Yeah. I wanted to talk to you but I was afraid...I don't know why" she explained. Vlad nodded, rubbing her arm.

"Well, no more of that, alright? You don't ever have to be afraid of me, dearest. Now, come inside. We can talk about whatever you want" he said, stepping aside so she could come inside.

———

Danny was sitting with Sam on the bed, looking into her eyes. The two of them were joking, playing games and talking about stupid stuff with one another. But eventually the two started kissing, and the kissing led to touching, and they wanted the touching to lead

somewhere else but despite the fact that both of them wanted it, they were also afraid.

Sam had crawled onto Danny's lap in the heat of their kiss, Danny wrapping his arms around her waist to hold her in place. They grabbed each other, bit each other, moaned into each other's mouths. And it was all going so well, Danny was squeezing his thighs, Sam was staring at him hungrily. But as she began to explore his body, he flinched, and it all went downhill.

She wasn't upset, she was a bit flustered, but she could never be upset with Danny about something like this. Danny was shaking though, apologizing profusely despite his sudden startle. Sam's hands were so soft, so slender. He wanted her to touch him, he was so hungry for her and he wanted more. But his body couldn't erase the feeling of Dash's cold, large hands, squeezing him and groping him. The way he'd slip his fingers between Danny's legs, and slap him in the face when he'd protest. The way he'd be slammed against the wall when he tried to push away, the way he'd get threatened to be outed if he ever told...

"Danny, it's ok" Sam assured. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you"

"It's not your fault" he sighed "I hate what Dash did to me"

"It'll *never* happen again, I promise" Sam assured. Danny took a deep breath before taking her hands again, looking her in the eyes with a serious face.

"Sam I...I want you" Danny whispered. "It's my first time so I wanna take it slow but...I want you. I want you so bad"

Sam smiled, putting a hand on his chest.
"It's my first time too" she said, blushing. "Let's take it slow. You let me know if you want me to stop, ok?"

Danny nodded, allowing her to slowly push him back. The heat came back. The memory of the pain Dash put him through was still vaguely there, but as long as he kept his eyes on Sam, he could find some pleasure in what she was doing to him. And with how she looked back at him, he felt a certain empowerment in knowing that he

was *allowing* this, and if he wanted to stop, he absolutely could.

# Chapter 21

**Summary for the Chapter:**

> lmao Vlad giving Danny "the talk" is something to live for

Danny flew home quickly as soon as Sam's body gave out on her. He wanted to stay, maybe make her something to eat when she woke up, but he didn't get the chance. Luckily, when he got back, no one came in to check on him, so he was able to wash up a bit and cover up the harsh marks on his body from his session last night. Danny smiled to himself; he knew it was strange to let himself be used in the way a woman would traditionally be used by her man, but he's comfortable enough in his identity as a male to feel a strange sense of empowerment from letting himself be vulnerable with the person he loves. Not that he'd ever tell anyone about that, that was too embarrassing, even for him.

The next day Danny decided to make it up to her, asking Regine to order a breakfast and have it delivered to Sam's house, putting the bill on Vlad's tab. The man was the one of the richest people alive, a $40 breakfast wasn't gonna kill him. The day was spent shopping for clothes, school supplies, and whatever other random things Vlad felt he needed to buy. It was boring and awkward, but it wasn't too bad. Jazz, being the girly girl she was, was a bit more excited than Danny about new clothes. Both he and Vlad cheered when she seemed to really like something, and that alone made things a bit more bearable.

The three of them went out to a fancy restaurant, but coming from a reasonably poor home life, Danny and Jazz had no idea what to order off the menu. Granted, out of the two, Danny was the one who was more likely to be difficult about ordering for the sake of being difficult. But in all honesty, neither of them recognized a thing from the menu.

"Dearest? Badger? Do you know what you want to order?" Vlad asked. The two of them looked at him, absolutely lost. He sighed. "Is there nothing you children like from the menu?"

"More like; nothing we understand" Danny said.

"We've never been to a place like this before, this is just a bit too...new" Jazz said, a bit more refined. Vlad nodded, taking the menu from them.

"Is there somewhere else you'd like to go?" he asked.

Jazz and Danny smiled at each other, knowing *exactly* where they wanted to go. And Vlad, naively, went with it.

———

"You two actually eat here?" Vlad asked, visibly uncomfortable. Jazz and Danny chuckled, nodding. The three of them made their orders, chatting casually as they carried their trays of food back to the table. It was all normal, until Jazz suddenly stared off.

"I'll be right back" she said, standing up and walking off.

"Where's she going?" Vlad asked. Danny shrugged.

"Probably off to get ketchup or something" he responded.

But she *wasn't* off getting ketchup, instead, Jasmine came back with her arms locked around that of her new friend, Emma.

"Danny, Uncle Vlad; this is my friend, Emma" Jazz introduced. Emma waved coolly. Jazz shrank a bit under Vlad's judgmental gaze and Danny's wide eyes, but Emma seemed to hold her cool, so Jazz did too. The two sat together at the table and conversation picked up like it had before.

———

Jazz ended up going to Emma's house, while Danny went back home with Vlad. Obviously, with no one left to see them, the two transformed and simply flew home. Danny made a turn to head to his room but was immediately stopped. Vlad grabbed Danny's arm, eyeing him with a smirk.

"Ahem" he cleared his throat, fixing his collar. "I believe you have some notes to show me"

Danny blushed immediately, remembering last night's events. He had to be out of his mind to think he could hide something like this from Vlad! Luckily for him though, he did manage to snag one of Sam's notebooks before he left, thank *god* he didn't forget.

"Yeah, yeah. Don't spazz, it's just notes Vlad" Danny teased. "I'm gonna go get changed first, then I'll give it to you"

Vlad shrugged, walking off to his room. Danny quickly sped off, throwing himself onto his bed.

All of the hospital gear was taken out of his room, and it was remodeled to look like an actual bedroom now. Danny was more than grateful, having grown tired of that stupid table he'd been lying on for all those days. He took a moment to let his sore body relish in the soft warmth of his sheets, feeling as though he could melt.

Danny pulled out the notebook, deciding he may as well bring it to Vlad now so he'll leave him alone. He walked back over to Vlad's room, knocking just like he'd done yesterday. Danny felt a strange, almost embarrassing disappointment, when Vlad came out still in his formal attire, unlike the pajamas he wore yesterday. He knows he and Vlad weren't really close, but it was kind of uncomfortable to always see the man at his peak of perfection. Never a hair out of place, never a moment where his stance wasn't perfectly straight, never any imperfection. Not until yesterday, that is. Danny felt ashamed to be wishing he could see Vlad like that more often.

"Ah Daniel" Vlad nodded "What ever could you need?"

"Here" Danny said, handing Vlad the notebook. Vlad looked through it briefly, smirking as he gave it back.

"Passes well enough. Come with me, I need to talk with you about something" Vlad said, opening his door a bit more for Danny to go inside. Danny obeyed, a bit on edge. The two sat on Vlad's large bed. Danny felt a bit awkward, but Vlad seemed unbothered as always.

"So..." Danny tapped his fingers a bit nervously. "What'd you want?"

"I wanted to have a certain talk with you that I know you've likely not had before..." Vlad began.

---

Jazz and Emma laughed hysterically together, rolling around on the bed. They laughed themselves out of breath, panting together happily.

"You're fun" Emma said. Jazz blushed.

"You think so?" She giggled

"Totally. Look, I got you something" Emma said, sitting up. Jasmine sat up too, curious. Emma dug in the drawer by her bed for a moment before pulling something out and handing it to Jazz, which she took gratefully. It was wrapped in a soft black cloth, tied off with a red string. Jazz untied it gently, wrapping the string around her wrist as a bracelet.

When she removed the cloth, Jazz saw a small rectangular box. And when she opened the box, there was a dagger with a very fake looking blade.

"You don't strike me as the stabby type" Emma mused. "but I like you, and I want you to have something that'll make you feel safer"

"It's beautiful, but I don't think this'll hurt anyone" Jazz chuckled.

"That's exactly what you *want* them to think" she responded "The blade is fake, it folds itself into the handle if you put enough pressure

on it, so it's impossible to stab anyone with it. But there's a button on the handle, and if you ever feel threatened, use it"

Jazz smiled, no one's ever had faith in her like this before.

"I love it" Jazz said.

"Be my girl?" Emma asked.

"Heck yeah"

_____

Danny lied on his bed, still embarrassed from the talk earlier. He wanted to stay as far as possible from Vlad for as long as he could. A sudden buzz from his game startled him out of his shame, and he quickly grabbed it to talk to his friends.

**-Private message from ChristianDeath666-**

**ChristianDeath666: Danny! Did you send me that breakfast earlier?**

Or just Sam, that's good too.

**Dan-Man: Hey Sam, yeah I had to go home yesterday but I felt bad for leaving so I thought I'd make it up to you**

**ChristianDeath666: you are so sweet. Next time though, spend the night. I wanna sleep with you. Like ACTUALLY sleep**

**Dan-Man: Haha yeah, next time for sure**

**ChristianDeath666: Ok, it's time to get serious. Tomorrow, after school, I need you to wait outside for me because we're going to court. The lawsuit just got through, and since the case is sort of centered around you, you're one of the most important speakers. So you have to speak first**

**Dan-Man: Seriously? ughhhh**

**ChristianDeath666: I tried to make your turn come a bit later but the lawyers just want to hear your testimony**

**Dan-Man: I get it. It's fine**

**ChristianDeath666: Tell me if there's anything you need Danny, I love you**

Danny blushed, his heart feeling a bit more at ease when he read that in Sam's voice. He thought of her soft touch, no longer afraid when he imagined it.

# Chapter 22

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> quick note, idfk how lawsuits work, so I'm basing this entirely on 13 reasons why

Vlad woke Danny the next morning instead of Regina. Danny nearly jumped out of his skin in surprise.

"Daniel, it's time for school, are you awake?" Vlad asked. Danny groaned loudly. "Oh please, that childish whining won't work on me. I told you you'd be going, now be downstairs in 10 minutes for breakfast. I'll be waiting in the car to drop you and your sister off"

"No! Nononono VLAD!" Danny exclaimed, chasing Vlad after he left the room. Vlad was very much taken off guard by this, jumping back a bit from the startle; something Danny had never seen him do before.

"Daniel what is the matter with you!?" Vlad exclaimed.

"You *can't* drive me to school! It'll ruin my social status" Danny exclaimed. Vlad looked beyond confused.

"I thought teenagers liked having rides to school"

"Well, yeah, but your car is too bold, if you drive me, everyone's gonna start asking for money"

"Then just tell them no, I don't understand why it's such a big deal"

"You just don't get it"

"Ok fine, I'll send you in an Uber. Just go get dressed"

Vlad walked off and Danny went back to his room to get ready for the day. Danny knew that if anyone found out he was living with Vlad, he'd end up becoming a popular kid. And it was so ironic because he used to dream of the day he'd become popular. But now his friends are gone, and he truly has to fight the battles of school life

alone. And if he ends up a popular kid, he'll be stuck with Dash for...who knows how long?

Danny quickly threw on some clothes and ran to his sister's room to bother her. He didn't want to dread the day any more than he already does, and he thought it'd be funny to mess with her since she's *really* not a morning person. He burst into the room, seeing her jump.

"Danny! Learn to knock" she exclaimed.

"Hi Jazz!" Danny said cheekily. Jazz groaned.

"I need privacy" she said

"But you're already dressed" Danny responded

"Ughh" she groaned. "C'mon, lets go get breakfast" she sighed. Danny chuckled, loving the mad expression on her face.

———

"Alright you two, the Uber is waiting for you outside. Hurry and go before you're both late" Vlad said.

"Wait! I have to go grab something before I go" Jazz exclaimed, running back upstairs to her room. Danny shrugged at Vlad, not knowing what's up with her. It was only a few minutes before she came back, ready to go. Vlad shooed Danny and Jazz out to their ride as soon as they were ready.

"What did you need?" Danny asked. Jazz sighed.

"My medicine" she said.

"You got it!?" Danny exclaimed.

"Sssh!" Jazz blushed. "I...yeah. I went to my therapist when I told Vlad I'd be hanging with friends, and I got a free refill. But that was a

one time thing, I have to buy the next one" she explained.

"That's fine. Vlad won't care, he's the weirdo that wanted kids" Danny chuckled. Jazz chuckled too, but frowned a bit quicker.

"I'm not gonna tell him" she said. "I don't want anyone to know"

Danny frowned. He can't argue with her, he has his secrets too. But medicine? Why would she want to hide that from Vlad, of all people?

"I won't tell anyone" Danny said. Jazz nodded.

"thanks"

———

Danny was surprised when school ended, and Dash hadn't bothered him at all. He's been giving him the side eye all day, but he didn't try anything like he had before. When the day came to an end, Danny decided to wait in front of the school for Sam.

A long limo pulled up and Danny stood with a smile, ready to see his girlfriend again. When Sam stepped out, he was surprised to see her so dressed up. She was dressed similarly to how Jazz dreams to dress every day; she wore a black pencil skirt with purple plaid, a purple dress shirt, and a black blazer. Her stockings were very lacy, complimenting her low heeled shoes nicely. her hair was in its traditional half up half down do, with the green scrunchie Danny had given her as a gift. It was a small gesture, he got it for her when her last one broke, and she wore it every day ever since. It was sweet. She seemed to wear a little makeup now too, her face a bit more pale with concealer, dark eyeshadow making her eyes look smokey, and striking green lipstick tying it all together. Danny swooned a bit. He wasn't really into office girls, but it's different when it's *his* girl.

"C'mon Danny" She called. "I knew you weren't gonna wear anything presentable" she sighed, shaking her head.

"Sorry, I didn't know" Danny said.

"It's fine. I brought you a spare suit, you can change in the car" she said. Danny blushed, it's one thing to get naked for her in the dark, but it's another thing to do it in broad daylight where she, the driver, and potentially others could see him clearly. She seemed to notice his nervousness, as she smiled softly to comfort him. "We have a bathroom, you can change in there" she said. Danny sighed with relief, nodding.

"Ok cool" He said.

They went into the car and Danny took his clothes to the bathroom Sam told him about. He quickly changed, and once he felt satisfied with how he looked, he came back out to sit with Sam.

"We look awesome" she said. "Don't worry, I'll be sitting right in the front with my lawyers, you're not alone"

"Thanks Sam" Danny said, holding her hand.

———

"Mr. Fenton" a lawyer began. Danny was standing on a stand, ready to answer whatever questions the head lawyer for his school was going to ask.

"Could you please call me Danny? Or Daniel? Mr. Fenton was my father" Danny insisted.

"Right. Daniel" the lawyer man corrected. "According to the documents, you were sexually assaulted on numerous occasions in the school and never spoke out about it. Your friends tried to find help for you, but the punishment decided was too lenient. Could you tell the courts why you didn't speak out on this issue yourself, instead of leaving it to your friends who had nothing to do with this?". Danny gulped. Maybe he wasn't so ready after all.

"Well, I was being threatened and blackmailed, so I wasn't planning on telling anybody" he explained.

"If you didn't plan to tell anyone, then wouldn't you agree that it's not the fault of the school's that your assaulter hasn't been properly punished?" the lawyer man asked. Danny looked up at the judge, unsure of what to say, but the judge simply looked down at him stoically, waiting for an answer.

"I didn't want to say anything because whenever I spoke out in the past about bullying and stuff, no one ever really did anything and it kept happening" Danny explained.

"Well, have you ever tried to talk to your parents?" the man asked. Sam's lawyer stood up, eyeing the man sharply.

"Objection, your honor. Relevance" she said. The judge nodded.

"sustained" the judge said. Only a minute or so passed before the lawyer for the school began talking again.

"Could you explain to the courts exactly the nature of this sexual assault, and the school's response?" he asked. Danny felt his chest pound, his body shook nervously.

"w-well..." Danny began. "He...he would touch me. A-and he-he would grab me and..." Danny's breath hitched and he couldn't continue to speak on this. "He made me feel very uncomfortable. That's all I can say"

"But did the sexual abuse escalate to what could be considered a felony?"

"You mean rape?" Danny asked, confused.

"That depends; did he rape you?"

"No sir"

"Then is it safe to assume that the assault remained relatively light"

"...yes sir"

"And what was the punishment offered by the school"

"They said they were going to give him an in-house suspension with mandatory therapy".

"Well, according to our documents, Mr. Baxter is a model student with exceeding skill in his extracurriculars. He's very much liked among his peers, and he's never had any history of mental illness. So I believe it's safe to assume that Mr. Baxter may have had conflicted feelings about you Daniel, feelings he may never have learned how to process. But if the nature of his bullying wasn't severe, you can't expect his punishment to be as severe as expulsion; especially when his entire future may suffer from it" The lawyer man explained. "Perhaps the therapy they had planned for him could've worked to help Mr. Baxter so that there wouldn't have been any issues between you two anymore"

Danny felt tears brim in his eyes. He didn't want to cry here, but he couldn't help it. He'd never been to court before. As much as he wanted to fight for justice, it was almost overwhelming just how real this is.

"No more questions your honor" the lawyer man concluded. The judge nodded, slamming the hammer down on the desk.

———

"It doesn't look good" Danny whispered. He and Sam were sitting in the limo again, his head down while she looked at him with concern.

"It's only the first day, it'll get better. I promise" Sam assured.

"But you *saw* the kind of lawyers they had! They didn't just have a few, they had a whole *team* of lawyers, and all of them are out to make *me* the crazy one to protect Dash so that the school doesn't go bankrupt. Your lawyers are great Sam, but they're not gonna help" Danny sighed.

"I'm doing the best I can Danny. The school gets a lot more funding than I thought, and even with as rich as my family is...I don't think we can *afford* the same legal defenses. But we have to be strong and do our best; if we give up now, then everything we've done will be for nothing" Sam said firmly. "Even if we lose, I'm still going to fight for you as much as I can"

Danny hugged Sam tight, never wanting to let go. He eventually had to though, when the driver announced they arrived at his house.

"Thanks for everything Sam, I love you" Danny said, kissing her quick before he left.

———

"And where have you been?" Danny jumped at the sudden voice. He turned around, seeing Vlad sitting on the couch, slowly stroking his cat. He had that same stern look on his face he always wore, but this time he actually looked a bit scary.

"I was just out with my friends, why?"
"Do you not remember what I said about telling me when you're going out?"

"Well, to be fair, I went out right after school, so I was technically already out. Plus, you said that to Jazz, not me. You already know I can take care of myself" Danny said, a bit cheeky.

"Daniel, when I set rules for your sister to follow, I expect you follow them too. It wouldn't be fair if I let you slide just because you're half ghost like me. And no, you *can't* protect yourself as well as you *think* you can" Vlad said. As he spoke, he had stood up and walked closer to Danny, pointing and poking the boy's chest for emphasis.

"What're you getting at, old man?"

"I read the newspaper Daniel, I'm not stupid, I know all about the lawsuit and your testimony!" Vlad shouted. "*Why* didn't you tell me

about what happened? *Why* didn't you tell me about the lawsuit? *Why* didn't you tell me you'd be testifying? *Why* didn't you tell me *anything*!?"

Danny found himself cornered, his back pressed against the wall while Vlad towered over him angrily. Danny shook in fear, seeing his father in Vlad's anger. he flinched sharply when Vlad raised his voice, once again starting to cry. Vlad immediately stopped shouting when Danny showed such distress. But even when he stopped, Danny continued to shake and quietly cry, falling to his knees and holding his arms out defensively.

"Daniel" Vlad whispered, hurt filling his voice. Vlad knelt beside Danny, slowly pulling him into a hug. Danny flinched, panicking a bit at the touch. It took a little while before he warmed up to it and hugged back, crying into Vlad's chest as he'd done before. And Vlad was more than willing to comfort Danny; scooping him into his lap and rocking him gently. Surprisingly, Danny didn't fight this; even seeming to lean a bit into the hold. Not that Vlad was complaining, no, he was actually glad he could share this closeness with someone.

"I couldn't tell you" Danny sobbed. "I was scared"

"I told you, you don't ever have to be afraid of me. I'm not here to hurt you, I love you" Vlad said, stroking Danny's hair. "I want you to be honest with me from now on, alright little badger?"

Danny nodded, sniffling a bit. Vlad smiled, continuing to stroke the boy's hair. He'll continue to love these children no matter what.

## Chapter 23

"Jasmine, I'd like to speak with you" Vlad said. Jazz was on her laptop facetiming Emma. She was a bit confused, but she wasn't the defiant type, so she told her girlfriend that she'd call back and then she sat up on her bed.

"Is there something wrong Uncle Vlad?" she asked. Vlad nodded, entering her room.

"I just had a talk with your brother about keeping secrets from me. Granted, I was a bit more angry with him because of the depth and severity of his secrets, but I wanted to address you and your secrets as well" he began. Vlad stood upright in front of Jazz, assuming the role of a stern guardian once more with his arms crossed and his face cold.

"I know you and your brother are afraid, but I do not appreciate lies or secrets under my roof. I'm your legal guardian now, and I love you both as if you were my own children, so there's no reason to be afraid of me. Especially not for something as trivial as *medicine*" Vlad explained. Jazz looked up at him with wide eyes, her mouth agape from shock.

"How did you-"

"I searched your room after I read about Daniel's testimony in the newspaper. I was afriad that if your brother was hiding something so serious from me, that you might be hiding something too. Thankfully, it doesn't seem that way, but these pills I found did catch my attention. I know a young girl like you needs her privacy, so I promise I'll never do this again if you promise to be honest with me, deal?" he asked. Jazz blushed, looking away in embarrassment.

"Deal" she sighed.

"Good girl" he smiled. "Now,  from now on, when you need a refill, you let me know and I'll get it for you"

"Ok Uncle Vlad"

"And if there's anything you're ever struggling with, you let me know and I'll do whatever I can to help you"

"Thank you Uncle Vlad"

"And I'll need you to give me your therapy schedule so I know when to expect you'll be out the house. And for safety purposes, I'll need you to tell me where the clinic is. I promise I won't go there unless you need me to"

"Yes Uncle Vlad"

Vlad could sense the growing irritation in his eldest teen and decided to leave it at that. He offered her a gentle smile, reminding her that he only had her best interest at heart.

"I love you, dearest" he said, giving her a small kiss on the forehead.

———

"Daniel, are you not going to go to court watch the next testimony?" Vlad asked. Danny was sitting on the couch, staring blankly at his hands which were folded in his lap.

"Dash is testifying...I don't wanna hear him lie" Danny said. Vlad frowned.

"Daniel, I promise, that boy will face his just punishment for what he's done" Vlad assured. Danny shook his head.

"It's hopeless. Sam's family can't afford the same legal defense as the school. And everyone's gonna side with Dash anyway" he said.

"Your friend may not be able to afford the defense you need, but I can. And if it'll help your case, I'll financially support her" Vlad said. Danny looked up at him with shock.

"You'd do that for me?" Danny asked. Vlad nodded.

"I won't let them best you in court"

_____

**Dan-Man: I have good news**

**HackerMan626: omggg I could really use some good news rn. I was at court today, and the testimony was just exhaustinggg**

**ChristianDeath666: Tucker!** 😎

**Dan-Man: Hey Tucker, I haven't heard from you in a while, hyb?**

**HackerMan626: Been pretty good. I just started homeschooling since I got expelled. I've got good grades, but I never really felt like applying for any other school. The only reason I stayed at Amity High was to see you guys. But that's dead, so I might as well take advantage of being away from the negativity. I've been kinda busy tho tbh. Sorry I haven't reached out**

**Dan-Man: It's cool dw**

**ChristianDeath666: Tell us the good news Danny!**

**Dan-Man: Sooo I wanted to keep the whole lawsuit thing a secret from Vlad but he ended up finding out cuz apparently it became an article in the newspaper**

**Hackerman626: You didn't know that that was gonna happen? Danny** 🤦 **you're better than this**

**Dan-Man: Shut up. Anyway, so I told him that we're kinda struggling to compete because the school has more funding, and he said he'd support us financially**

**ChristianDeath666: omg really? I'd usually hate that, but right now, I think we could really use the help**

**Dan-Man: Yeah! Maybe this won't turn out so bad after all**

**ChristianDeath666: Hopefully**

**HackerMan626: You guys wanna hang out?**

**Dan-Man: I'd love to! Buttt I'm kinda grounded**

**HackerMan626: Whaaaaat!? Why???**

**ChristianDeath666: Vlad can ground you??**

**Dan-Man: Yes, Vlad can ground me. He's my legal guardian now. He was just mad that I didn't tell him about the court stuff**

**ChristianDeath666: I'm sorry Danny, but you were kinda stupid for not thinking that a lawsuit against AMITY HIGH SCHOOL would end up in the papers.**

**HackerMan626: Yeah man, even if it somehow didn't end up in the papers, Amity high is one of the biggest schools in the area. He was gonna find out eventually**

**Dan-Man: Yeah, yeah. Funny funny. I gotta go before I get busted with my game.**

**HackerMan626: Try and find out when you're gonna get your phone back, I miss video calls**

**Dan-Man: I'll ask**

**-Dan-Man has gone offline-**

---

Vlad was lying on his bed, absolutely exhausted. His body ached miserably, and he felt just as bad emotionally as he did physically. There was nothing in particular making him sad per se, but he couldn't help feeling awful. He felt pathetic, he felt weak. He felt

empty, alone. Even with new people in his life to love, he feels as though he is undeserving of the love he craves. Like there's no point to loving anymore. He's too useless to be happy, why try if he'll just end up unhappy in the end?

Vlad threw a sweater on, deciding that a walk should help get his mind off this misery. Had he been without the children, he may have been a bit more careless. But he can't allow himself to fall so deep into despair that he leaves Daniel and Jasmine without their uncle. If there's anything this man could live for, it's them.

"Mr. Masters, are you alright?"

Vlad turned to see his maid, Regina. She's been Daniel's main caretaker when he was injured, tending to his wounds and all his needs while Vlad was busy with work. He wasn't the type to commend his maids for simply doing their job, but for her, he holds a deep gratitude. Without her service, Daniel probably wouldn't be here today. And without the boy, Vlad wasn't too sure how strong his hold on his own sanity would be. Jasmine was just as irreplaceable as her brother, but Daniel...he's different. He's the only other person in the entire world who could possibly understand Vlad and his struggle of being half ghost. Granted, Vlad had undergone *much* more suffering from his ghost half, and in a way, he was glad Danny didn't understand that pain. But even if Daniel couldn't understand Vlad's pain, he could at least relate to him in one way. Without Danny, Vlad would truly be all alone in this world.

"I'm fine, Sanchez. A bit fatigued" he said. "Did you need something?". Regina's expression didn't change, but Vlad could tell she was about to ask for something. She always tensed up before she asked him for something.

"My daughter must testify for her school's lawsuit. It's becoming a very stressful time for us. I wanted to ask if I could take a few days off to go on a vacation with my husband" she asked. Vlad raised a brow.

"You'd go on a vacation while your daughter testifies for court?" he asked. Regina nodded.

"My daughter is a wonderful girl, I know she's not in any trouble. But she says she copes with stress much better when her parents are away. You know how teenagers are about that, sir" she said.

"Be sure to give me a call to tell me how long you'll be out" Vlad said dismissively. Regina nodded, bowing quickly before she left.

# Chapter 24

**Notes for the Chapter:**

I headcanon that Danny speaks spanish don't @ me

"Hey everybody, party at my house tonight!" Paulina shouted.

Ever since the lawsuit, the school has been dull and lifeless. A party sounded pretty nice. Dash was still in his social clique, but he wasn't nearly as influential now that these accusations against him have gone public. And that was shown when Paulina handed out invites to everyone *but* him. Dash was at a loss. He's always really liked Paulina, more than anyone. He worked hard to impress her, so that maybe she'd like him back. Dash didn't even *like* Danny, he only did what he did to him because he was *easy*. He was so sure that if he beat it into Danny, the wimp wouldn't tell anyone. But now Dash's scholarships were gone, he's lost the respect of his peers, and the girl of his dreams would never acknowledge him again.

"Danny" Paulina called. Danny was sitting alone at his usual table, and though he wasn't in any danger, he still couldn't help flinching nervously when anyone got near. Even Paulina.

Paulina giggled at his nervousness, ruffling his hair as she sat beside him atop the table. She looked at him flirtatiously, a look that Danny couldn't deny was enticing. He's over his crush on Paulina. Doesn't mean she's any less pretty.

"Mi mama y mi papa van a salir. No one's home, party at my house and you're invited chico" she winked. Danny blushed but shook his head.

"Thank you Paulina, pero no. I can't, estoy castigado" Danny said. Paulina lifted his chin, frowning sadly.

"Danny" she whined. "Dash is losing his seat at our table, no es un buen perdedor ahora despues de lo que hizo. Don't you want him gone?" Danny gulped.

"Well, y-yes but...el me matara" Danny whispered. Paulina laughed at that.

"Aye quelindo" she teased, squeezing his cheeks. "Dash won't try *anything* if you're with us"

Paulina gave Danny his invite, getting off the table and waving as she walked off.

_____

**ChristianDeath666: So she gave you an invite but not Dash?**

**Dan-Man: Yeah. I know that the popular kid parties have always gone wrong in the past, but that's always because of Dash. Maybe it'll be better this time? I dunno. Plus, I'm grounded...**

**ChristianDeath666: Look, if you really wanna go, then go. Dash isn't gonna be there, so there's no reason to be afraid. If you don't like it, you could always either come to my house, or go back to your house. Just make sure to get permission first, you don't wanna get in any more trouble than you're already in for a party that probably won't even be that good.**

**Dan-Man: yeah. I'll ask. Do you wanna come?**

**ChristianDeath666: absolutely not. You have fun tho**

**Dan-Man: ok. Thanks Sam**

**ChristianDeath666: Sure thing xoxo**

Danny sighed. Would he be making the right choice, going to this party? He went to Vlad's room, not bothering to knock. Danny was surprised to see Vlad lying in bed, his hair a loose mess as it once was before. He was pale, sweating. He was still wearing his sweater, and

Danny decided he'd probably overheated in his sleep.

"Vladdd" Danny groaned, trying to lift him into a sitting position so he could take the sweater off. But to no avail, Vlad was a heavy man. "Vlad!"

Vlad woke up groggily, eyeing Danny tiredly, and confused.

"Ah...my little badger" he whispered. "What do you need?"

"Vlad you're heavy" Danny huffed. "take off your sweater before you overheat". Vlad chuckled, a chesty sound.

"I'm fine dear boy, don't worry so much. I just forgot to open the window. It gets muggy in here" Vlad said. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine" Danny quickly said. Vlad smiled.

"But you *want* something. I can tell" he said "Daniel, do you understand why I punished you?". Danny nodded, looking down in shame.

"It's because I was keeping secrets from you, and I lied to you" Danny answered. Vlad nodded. He sat up, reaching up to stroke Danny's hair.

"That's right. Daniel, I'm never going to hurt you, I promise. But I have to know that I can trust you to be honest with me. If I can't trust you, then how will I know you're safe? How will I protect you when you're in trouble?" he asked. Danny didn't respond, he didn't have anything to say. "Can I trust that from now on, you'll be honest with me? No more secrets?" he asked. Danny looked up. Was Vlad giving him another chance?

"Yes, I promise!" Danny said. Vlad smiled, ruffling Danny's hair.

"Alright. Then you can go wherever it is you wanted to go. Just be sure to call"

———

Danny went to Paulina's house nervously. Was he underdressed? Did he smell ok? Who was gonna be there?

"Danny!" Paulina exclaimed. This was by far the biggest party he'd ever seen. Everyone was drinking and smoking; in the pool, in front of the house, in the living room, everywhere. Danny felt out of place, having never had interest in that stuff.

"Hey" Danny said, having second thoughts.

"Sooo, que piensas?" she asked.

"It's....alguna cosa" he chuckled nervously.

"You need a drink" Paulina said. She dragged him into the house before leaving him alone, presumably to get drinks. Danny tried to strike up conversation with whoever wasn't eating someone else's face, but if they weren't having sex, they were too drunk to function. Paulina came back with 2 large red cups.

"Aqui" she sternly said, handing one to him.

"Whoa" Danny said. "It's just like the movies"

"Aye Danny you're so stupid it's almost cute" Paulina said. Danny chuckled awkwardly.

"Paulina, you've been great but kinda have a girlfriend already" Danny clarified. Paulina smirked with intrigue.

"Oh I know" she said. "You don't think I'd catch on? I'm just being friendly chico, don't be so uptight"

Danny nodded, still a bit unsure. He drank from the cup she gave him. His eyes bulged from the intense taste, he so badly wanted to spit it out, but he didn't want to be rude. Danny gulped the liquid down, putting the cup aside as he was no longer interested in its contents.

"Wow...that was...disgusting" Danny gagged.

"Do you like it? My parents have the strongest liquor in their cabinet" she mused. Danny smiled politely, but he really didn't feel so good. He felt hot, he felt his heart beating fast.

"Can I uh, borrow your phone?" he asked. Paulina blinked in confusion.

"Why do you need my phone?" she asked.

"Mine is kinda not working, and I'm really not feeling good right now" he said. Upon her suspicious look, he cleared his throat. "O-or, y'know, I could just walk home! Thanks so much for inviting me, but I think I'm gonna go now-"

"My parents have a phone upstairs in their room. Come with me" Paulina said. Danny shrugged, deciding to follow where she led.

# Chapter 25

**Trigger warning for rape in this chapter, stay safe y'all!**

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Paulina brought Danny upstairs to her parent's room. He felt a bit of relief when he was away from the booming loudness of the party downstairs. It almost felt surreal to hear it while in the comfort of the quiet upstairs. Paulina shut the door behind them when they went inside.

"so, where's the phone?" Danny asked. He was frozen in place when Paulina threw herself at him, latching her mouth on his. Danny muffled a protest, pushing her off him. "Paulina!" he shouted.

"What? Don't act like you don't want this, I see how you look at me" she snapped.

"What are you *talking* about, I-I don't look at you" Danny said. "Look, I gotta go" he started for the door, but panicked when he saw that it was locked. He was just about to phase his hand through the lock, to see if maybe he could unlock it, but Paulina snatched him away before he could even try. She threw him on the bed, glaring over him.

"Paulina! Let me go" Danny exclaimed. He winced when he felt a sudden headache wash over him, he felt like the world around him was spinning. But he didn't even drink that much!

"You don't think I'm pretty, Danny?" she asked, hurt. "What's so good about Samantha anyway!? She's not so innocent you know, she used to look at me the same way you do. She's just a quirky nerd who thinks she's better than everyone"

"Wait, are you...are you *jealous* of Sam!?" Danny asked. "Why are you jealous of Sam? You're like, the hottest girl in the whole school!"

Danny exclaimed. He regretted saying that the moment he said it, and dread washed over him when Paulina smirked hungrily.

She began to rip his clothes off, gawking at his semi naked body. Danny lied coldly in his underwear, and he felt himself growing nauseous at the lustful stare Paulina laid upon Danny's body.

"I must admit, you're kind of cute I guess" she said. "But why do you have a sports bra on?"

Danny looked away, blinking the tears away.

"Paulina, get off me" Danny whispered. Paulina lifted the chest binder, gasping loudly when she saw underneath.

"You...you're a *girl*" she whispered. Danny forcefully pushed her off him, his anger overpowering his body's pain. His strength wasn't as it usually was though, and Paulina quickly recovered from the shove. She slapped him, climbing back on him.

"I never liked you" Paulina growled. "You'll always be a nerd, even if you are a popular kid"

There was suddenly loud banging on the door.

"PAULINA!"

"Who's that!?" Danny exclaimed.

"My admirer. He can NEVER TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER!" She shouted angrily at the door. "I brought you here to make him jealous. So your secret is safe with me"

"FENTON, IF YOU'RE IN THERE HAVING *SEX* WITH PAULINA, I WILL *CHOP. YOUR. DICK. OFF*!"

Danny whimpered in fear, crying out when Paulina began to hump him.

"Yeah! I'm having hot sex with Danny in here! Now leave me alone!!!" Paulina shouted, loudly moaning for effect. Danny began to cry, trying to push her off him, but she held him down, bouncing on

his lower half forcefully, making the bed squeak. Danny screamed, trying to fight her off, but his body was just so *weak*...

Paulina's body seemed to tremble, and after a matter of minutes, she spasmed, moaning loudly. Danny quite literally gagged in disgust, feeling bile build up in his throat.

"Oh...Oh my..." she breathed heavily. "W-what just..."

"Did I just...with you? B-but you're....I'm not into-"

Danny cut her off when the sick he's been feeling the whole time exploded. He vomited all over her beautiful dress and he wasn't even sorry. Paulina screamed, storming out the room and leaving Danny there to cry. He didn't want to be there anymore. He never wanted to see anyone's face from school ever again.

———

Vlad was finished with his work for the day and was about to go to bed, deciding he'd see Daniel in the morning. But as soon as he sat down to relax, that peace was broken. Danny flew in his room in his ghost form, and as soon as he saw Vlad, he transformed back and threw himself onto him. Vlad obviously didn't reject the boy when he rushed in for comfort, but the suddenness terrified him. Danny was supposed to be out having a good time, why was he back, hugging Vlad and crying his eyes out?

"Daniel, what on earth happened!?" Vlad asked. Danny shook his head, squeezing Vlad tighter. He wasn't ready to talk. Vlad didn't force him. "Come my little badger, let's sit down and relax a bit. Don't cry, child, everything is going to be ok" he sat down on the bed, seating Danny next to him on the bed.

"I can't go back" Danny said.

"No one's making you go anywhere. Talk to me, my dear boy" Vlad encouraged. Danny took a deep breath and nodded, wiping his tears

away.

"Touched me..." he whispered.

"Who touched you? Was it that Baxter kid?" Vlad asked, a bit protectively. Danny shook his head, covering himself a bit.

"Mh mh...Paulina did..." Danny whispered. Vlad looked confused for a moment before his eyes went wide.

"Paulina? As in, Paulina *Sanchez?"* he asked. Danny nodded, confusion written all over his innocent face.

"you know her?" Danny asked. Vlad nodded with a serious look on his face.

"Her mother works for me. And once she's fired, I'll make sure I *ruin* that family" he proclaimed. "Stay here, and *don't* touch anything"

Vlad kissed Danny's forehead, giving him an assuring nod before he left the room, shutting the door behind him.

Danny sat defeatedly on Vlad's bed for a bit, replaying the scene over and over in his head. Paulina must've felt great, what with how she looked and sounded. But Danny, Danny felt nothing but disgust. He felt like he was a stranger to his own body now. Who was gonna use him next?

———

"I want you to take this letter to the Sanchez family's house as soon as you get word that they've returned from their trip" Vlad ordered.

"And what am I, your servant?"

"No, but *you* work for *me*. And if you don't follow my orders, I'll see to it that that precious youth of yours dies out; your legacy in both

this world *and* our world will perish by my hand" Vlad threatened. "Am I understood, *Spectra?"*

*"*Yes sir"

———

"Mama! Papa! Welcome home" Paulina smiled. She managed to clean the house up nicely before her parents got back so that none of them would know what went down while they were gone.

"Hello sweetie" her mother said.

"Did you enjoy your trip?" Paulina asked.

"More than I should have. It was wonderful being work free this weekend, but now I have to go back to work and serve Mr. Master's sulking children"

A knock at the door broke them away from their conversation. Paulina opened the door and was surprised to see her old counselor.

"Miss Spectra? What are you doing here? And how did you find my house?" Paulina asked. Spectra smiled sweetly, entering without beckon.

"Hey!" Paulina exclaimed.

"Hello Mrs. and Mr. Sanchez, how are you both doing on this swell day?" she asked, shaking their hands politely.

"Paulina, who is this?" her father asked.

"Please excuse the sudden intrusion, please, call me Spectra. I was a counselor at your daughter's school, I'm so glad I finally get to meet you"

Paulina looked between her parents nervously.

"Now don't worry, I'm not here about anything that has to do with

your daughter's performance at school, or anything pertaining to the lawsuit happening. I'm here to share a special letter that Mr. Vlad masters; richest man in the world, has sent me to bring to you"

Paulina's parents smiled, offering Spectra a seat so they could all talk.

"Am I getting a raise?" her mother joked.

"Actually, I'm afraid the nature of this letter is a bit...different, from what you're expecting. Regina, right?" Spectra confirmed. Regina nodded, now a bit confused.

"I recently began working for Mr. Masters to counsel his two teenagers since they've been through such awful tragedies recently. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about Regina, but I'm not allowed to discuss in detail" Spectra began.

"While you two were away, your daughter apparently had somewhat of a *get together*, and Vlad's adopted son seemed to have gotten a little lost in the mix. Paulina, dear, you remember Daniel Fenton, am I right?" she asked, eyeing the teen girl who went pale.

"D-Danny is Vlad's kid now...?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper. Spectra nodded.

"But don't worry dear, you're not in any trouble. Let me read the letter my boss has sent me to bring you" she cleared her throat.

"Dear Miss Regina Sanchez; I hope all is well and you enjoyed your vacation. It has come to my attention that while you were away with your husband, your daughter deemed it appropriate to host an unsupervised party of sorts with her peers from school. While I don't necessarily care for what you or your family does outside my manor, it becomes my place to step in when it is affecting my family. And while you may not believe me when I tell you this; my child, Daniel Fenton, has brought to my attention that your daughter has assaulted him in a similar fashion to that of Mr. Dash Baxter. However, my child insists that your daughter took her assault a step further when

she brought him upstairs during her little party, and took advantage of his body in a petty attempt to keep someone else away from her. I regret to inform you that on behalf of your daughter's actions while you were away, I am inclined to release you from my employment, permanently. I wish you all the best of luck in trying to find work elsewhere, though if you find it difficult to do so, then I urge you to teach your family the importance of respecting the Masters family from now on. I do not wish ill will upon anyone, but when you seek harm upon my family, I will use every last ounce of my power to teach you your place. Best of wishes: Masters"

The house was silent after the letter was read. Paulina was shaking and holding back tears. The phone rang loudly from upstairs, and her father rushed up to get it. There was a moment when Paulina's mom looked at her, the hatred in her eyes unmatched. The focus went to her father when he came back down, his face shocked.

"Mi amor, who was it?" Paulina's mother asked. He looked at her with shock, his mouth agape.

"I...I just got fired"

"WHAT!?"

"They said they'd lose funding if they kept me, so they just..."

"Miss. Spectra" Paulina's mother began, desperation filling her voice. "Please, I can't lose my job. My family needs to eat, I'll do absolutely anything for my job back, anything!"

"It's been such a pleasure meeting you, I'll see myself out now. Ta ta!"

"WAIT!"

But Spectra ignored them, leaving and slamming the door shut. She wasn't about to leave so soon though, the sound of Paulina's screams as her mother chased her and yelled in Spanish was a sound that rang pleasantly in her ears. She stayed, only long enough to bask in the suffering of that family before reporting back to her master. If every

mission he sent her on was this rewarding, she could get used to being his little chess piece.

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> I noticed that in a lot of these fics, Spectra is used to feed off of Danny's suffering (which I don't mind cuz I love seeing ma boi suffer). But I wanted to try something different; Vlad in this fic doesn't wanna hurt anyone anymore because he has a family now, but that doesn't mean he's weak. He's still very much respected by his minions and the other ghosts in the ghost zone. So I used that to my advantage to make the people who made Danny suffer, pay. Also idk if anyone is gonna catch this, but idk how to write rape scenes without it sounding...wrong. So I referenced the bmc musical scene when Chloe traps Jeremy. That scene was so fucked up imo

# Chapter 26

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> I cannot apologize enough, I'm so embarrassed cuz this has never happened before. You all must be so confused! I accidentally clicked "save as draft" on the last chapter instead of "post", and I thought the last one was up already, so I posted this. But if you've already read this chapter, I highly suggest you go back and read the last one so you're not confused. But trigger warning cuz there's some explicit depiction of r*pe in that chapter. Sorry you guys, love y'all!

Danny woke up strangely more comfortable than he usually was. When he sat up, he realized he was still in Vlad's room.

Danny screamed, jumping off the bed without thinking. The sound woke Vlad out his sleep and he quickly jumped to Danny's side, panicking.

"I'm here, you're ok" Vlad exclaimed, checking Daniel all over to see if he were hurt.

"Ah- I'm fine!" Danny exclaimed, blushing in embarrassment. He swatted Vlad's hands away. "I'm sorry...I was just startled. I don't even remember falling asleep"

Vlad groaned, stretching now that his panic faded. Danny admired the muscular physique of the man, somewhat jealous of the man's shape. He secretly wished that he could look like that when he grows up. Not like that was ever gonna happen. Unless Danny could somehow get his hands on some Testosterone.

"Are you alright little badger?" Vlad asked, standing up. Danny nodded. Vlad began to brush his hair, no longer paying attention to Danny.

"I've neve met a guy who's so obsessed with his looks before. Why do

you walk around your own house looking perfect all the time?" Danny asked. Vlad chuckled, tying his hair into it's ponytail.

"Even if I'm home, I still have a reputation to keep and faces to impress. I can't have my maids and employees telling everyone that Mr. Masters is a scruffy homebody" Vlad explained. Danny nodded, though he didn't fully understand.

"I've been meaning to ask; have you seen my phone anywhere? I never got it back, but it was dead when I last had it" Danny said.

"Oh, that old thing. I found it in your pocket when I brought you here. The screen was shattered, and it wouldn't turn on, so I threw it out" Vlad said. Danny's eyes went wide.

"You threw it out!?" he exclaimed. "Did you at least keep the SD card!?"

"The what?"

"Oh my goddd"

"Daniel, I don't understand what the big deal is, I ordered you a new one and it should be coming in in a few days"

"That's not the point! My old phone had all my contacts, and I had really important stuff there"

"What kind of important stuff?"

"Stuff like pictures of my parents!"

Danny covered his mouth after he blurted that out. He knew he was probably in for some trouble, bringing up his parents again after everything Vlad had done for him. But to his surprise, Vlad didn't yell or hit him. He didn't even look mad, he looked...sad.

"I'm sorry" Vlad said. Danny blinked in surprise.

"I didn't mean it like that Vlad"

"Of course not. But you *do* still miss your parents; though, I can't

possibly fathom why"

"They're my parents"

"They nearly killed you"

"They didn't mean it"

"Why do you keep making excuses for them!?"

"I'm not so quick to hate people like you do!"

Vlad glared at Danny, storming out the room and slamming the door behind him. *Now*, Danny took it too far.

Danny shouldn't have been saved that day. He would've been just fine if his father had killed him. It's hard having to live knowing that your parents will never love you again. And it's hard accepting the love of someone new when you're still struggling to move on.

Danny looked around the room. He wasn't going to touch anything; or rather, he didn't plan to. But when he saw some sprawled bandages, he couldn't help but be curious.

"Why would he need this in his room?" Danny asked himself. He walked over, holding it up to have a closer look. Danny jumped back with a gasp, dropping the bandage wrap to the floor when he saw that they were bloody. Danny was suddenly very concerned. What would Vlad be needing this for?

Danny quickly ran out the room, searching everywhere for Vlad. He looked in the living room, the kitchen, all the other empty rooms, but he couldn't find the man anywhere. Danny began to panic. He rushed back inside, finding a maid. Good enough.

"E-excuse me" Danny exclaimed. "I don't think I know you but I'm looking for Vlad...I'm Danny"

the maid was tall, her legs being the longest parts of her body. She had pasty white skin with discolored patches, almost as though she were burned. Her eyes were small, and her hair was very long. Her long black hair fell in sharp curls at her lower back, tied half up

almost like Sam's. The woman wore gloves, unlike the last maid. She looked like a doll.

"Mr. Masters is occupied at the moment" she said monotonously. Danny nodded.

"Do you know when he'll be back?" he asked. The maid looked away for a moment. She looked back at Danny with the same monotonous stare she seemed to wear before walking off without another word, leaving Danny more confused that ever.

———

Danny sat on the couch, hugging himself sadly. He sat in the corner like a guilty child. He didn't mean to make Vlad angry, he didn't mean to miss his parents so much, but he couldn't help it. Some hours had passed before Vlad came back. He looked perfect as always, with his hair tied tightly in it's ponytail and his suit without any wrinkles or creases. But he looked pale, his eyes seemed to have bags. Danny perked up a bit nonetheless seeing him again. He was relieved, but once again felt shame wash over him.

"Ah Daniel" Vlad said. His voice held the same professional tone it always held, but somehow he sounded weak. Vlad didn't seem to mind it too much though. He sat beside Danny on the couch, putting a hand on the boy's back.

"My maid told me you ran into her earlier looking for me. Did you need something?" Vlad asked. Danny shook his head, looking away.

"Just because I'm looking for you doesn't mean I need something, you know" Danny grumbled. There was a bit of silence between them before Danny spoke again. "I'm sorry I yelled at you..."

Vlad pat Danny's head, ruffling the boys hair. His movements, however, were a bit more lazy than before.

"Dear boy, I could never be angry with you over something as trivial

as that" Vlad said. Danny hugged Vlad, looking away shyly as he did so. Vlad seemed a bit confused, surprised even, but he would never reject the boy's affection. So he hugged back with a smile, stroking his hair.

"Are you dying?" Danny asked nervously. Vlad couldn't hold back his shocked laugh, he covered his mouth to stop himself.

"I'm sorry, excuse me" he quickly apologized. "What on earth gave you that idea, little badger?"

"I-I found bandages in your room! And they were really bloody and I-I thought..."

Vlad seemed to frown a bit at the mention of bandages.

"What are they for?' Danny asked. Vlad shook his head.

"Some things are better left unsaid, Daniel" Vlad said. Danny huffed.

"Now, I see you've met my maid" Vlad noted, changing the subject. With the clap of his hands, the doll looking girl came to his side, bowing lightly.

"Daniel, this is Lola. She's my *personal* maid. She has duties that pertain to me directly; she takes care of me when I'm sick, organizes my paperwork when I'm busy, and she's the only maid I trust to handle my belongings. Because of this, she has special privileges over the other maids in the manor. She's allowed to ignore bell callings from any of my guests, she's allowed to enter rooms that would be off limits to anyone else, and she's not required to serve any guest. The only downfall is, she gets much less vacation days than the other days, but I take special care not to overwork her. She usually spends her time cleaning my bedroom, and my study, and tending to my paperwork if I ever fall ill. She's not usually in any main areas, which is why you've never met her. But I did plan to introduce you. Lola, this is my godson, Daniel" he introduced.

Danny waved politely at Lola, offering a kind smile, but Lola only bowed in response, her face unchanging.

"Please don't think too much of her silence. My maid is a naturally

quiet one" Vlad explained.

"Why do you trust her more than the other maids? Isn't everyone super loyal to you?" Danny asked. Vlad chuckled lowly.

"Everyone respects my money, my influence, my power and status. But that respect is only out of fear. No one but Lola is truly loyal to me. If they could, everyone would jump at the opportunity to take my power from me" Vlad explained. "You'll understand when you're older"

"So then why do you trust her so much?" Danny asked. He didn't mean anything bad by this, he was just confused. Vlad wasn't the trusty type with people he couldn't gain anything from. Well, with the exception of him and Jazz, for some reason.

"Lola wasn't always my servant" Vlad began. "She was a refugee. Her home life was less than ideal, and when she was old enough to escape, she sought sanctuary with me. I was a poor man back then. I had nothing but my bank job and my small apartment. Still, it was the safest place she could run to. And she didn't come to me empty handed, she held her own weight and paid me for my kindness, generously. I was much more humble back then, so I refused her money. Instead, I made her swear her loyalty to me"

"I was plotting back then. I was humble, yet greedy all the same. I didn't want anything gifted to me, I wanted to *steal.* And steal, I did. Lola helped me all the way, until I eventually ended up here. She had the opportunity to flee, to seek a life of her own. But she stayed. She honored her promise and remained my loyal servant ever since. So I spoil her much more than the ordinary servants. She deserves it" Vlad explained.

"Wow" Danny breathed. "That sounds cool"

"Indeed" Vlad mused.

"Then why'd you spend all these years obsessing over my mom when you had someone here this whole time you could've gone out with?" he asked. Both Vlad and Lola blushed, very much taken aback by the question.

"That's not how romance works Daniel!" Vlad exclaimed. Danny laughed, no longer sad or afraid.

## Chapter 27

Jazz was showing Emma around the manor, basking in the shocked face the punk girl wore.

"I didn't think you lived in such a big home" she said. Jazz chuckled.

"I didn't think I'd be living here either. My brother and I moved in not too long ago. There was some conflict with our parents, so our godfather took us in" Jazz explained. "Oh shoot! Speaking of my godfather, we should probably get to my room before he sees us; he's really judgmental" Jazz said, taking Emma's hand.

The two of them held hands, walking to Jasmine's room. But as they walked, one of the maids bumped into Emma.

"Hey!" Emma exclaimed. Jazz looked at Emma for a moment, before turning to look at the maid.

Long, beautiful curly black hair falling to her lower back. Her skin resembled porcelain, but her eye and cheek looked as though they were burned. The maid wore gloves, an accessory no other maid wore. She was gorgeous.

"I-I'm sorry, please excuse us" Jasmine apologized. Emma and the maid stared at one another, their eyes wide.

"Lucy..." Emma breathed out. The maid, Lucy, didn't say anything, but Jazz could tell that she wanted to say something. She looked almost as though she wanted to reach out for Emma, before she ran off. Jazz watched in confusion as the beautiful maid took her leave.

"Emma?" Jazz whispered. "Are you alright?"

"I have to go" Emma said. Jazz called out to her, trying to stop her, but Emma didn't listen. She ran away, just as the maid, leaving Jazz to stand in her confusion.

_____

Danny sat on one of the desks in Vlad's study. He swung his feet lightly as Lucy cleaned.

"So..." Danny began, trying to strike up conversation. "You don't talk much do you?".

Nice one. Of course, she ignored him.

"Do you like Vlad?". No answer. "Do you believe in ghosts?"

Lucy froze for a brief second, but continued to clean, as if brushing off her reaction. Danny was now, *very* intrigued. But he couldn't ask too much on the subject. In case she didn't know about Vlad's ghost half, Danny didn't want to be the reason she finds out.

"Daniel, what are you doing here?" Vlad asked, entering his study. Danny grinned innocently.

"Nothing! I'm talking to Lucy" he answered. Lucy didn't acknowledge either of them as she began to put her cleaning supplies away. Once her job was done, she turned to Vlad and bowed silently, her face just as stoic as always. Vlad smiled politely at her before looking back at Danny.

"Don't you have homework to do?" he asked. Danny chuckled as he shook his head.

"Well if you're going to torture my maid, you might as well help her work" Vlad said. Danny felt his smile fade. He didn't want to clean. But he might as well, now that Vlad was telling him to.

Danny followed Lucy around the manor, watching her work. He attempted to help clean a few times, but each time he did, she'd take over and redo whatever he did in a much more efficient manner. Danny knew how to clean, so the gesture was a bit embarrassing. But he didn't say anything about it.

"So where'd your scar come from? It looks pretty cool" Danny said,

putting up the finger guns to earn her attention. It worked, but she still didn't respond. "Are you a doll? A robot?"

No response. Danny was growing bored. What would it take to get her to speak? He knew she could, she spoke once before. A spark came to Danny's mind and he grinned deviously.

———

Jazz knocked on the door to Vlad's study, looking up at the man with less fear than she usually felt around him. She'd grown comfortable, which she wasn't sure was a good or bad thing.

"Uncle Vlad, can I go to my friend's house?" Jazz asked. Vlad raised a brow.

"Who is this friend?" he asked. Jazz looked away nervously, rubbing her arm.

"Emma...the girl I introduced you to at the Nasty Burger?" she said sheepishly. She knew he didn't like her, she was the exact opposite of what he deemed ladylike, and a girl like that, in his eyes at least, would only be trouble. But she didn't care. She loved Emma. Vlad's distaste was obvious in his face, and when he groaned.

"Fine, but don't be out all day" he said. Jazz smiled, hugging Vlad happily.

"Thank you Uncle Vlad, I'll be back soon" she said, kissing him quick on the cheek before running off. The gesture was very much unexpected, and Vlad stood in shock even after she'd left.

Jazz ran to Emma's house, only barely remembering the address and getting herself lost a few times. But she made it, she got there and she was not going to let her girlfriend suffer in silence.

Jazz knocked, but flinched a bit when the door creaked open. Emma was dressed in pajamas, her eyes red and puffy as though she's been crying.

"Hey babe" she said, looking down. "Sorry I left like that"

"You gonna let me in? I wanna talk to you" Jazz said softly. Emma opened the door wider, letting her in. The two shared a small kiss before sitting on the couch.

"How do you know Lucy?" Jazz asked. Emma sighed, ready to tell what was going to be a long story.

"She was my sister" Emma said. Jazz's eyes widened a bit but she remained quiet.

"It was just me, my big sister, and our sister Lucy, the oldest. My father left when my mom was pregnant with me, apparently he found a mistress or something. And my mother died when I was really young, so I lived in foster care with Lucy and my other big sister until they turned old enough to inherit our grandparents house. It was a really big house, but it only made things more difficult. More bills to pay, more property taxes, more places to clean, blah blah blah. I tried to help as much as I could; I'd clean whenever I wasn't busy, and I didn't ask for many things. When I turned 10, and Lucy was 20, something happened and Lucy ran away"

"What happened?" Jazz asked.

"I'm not sure. She wouldn't tell me. All I know is that it was something really bad, and she had to go far away because of it. And...she never came back" Emma sighed.

"My other sister took care of me while Lucy was away. And surprisingly, we somehow weren't poor anymore. Wherever Lucy went, she was making more money than before. We had more food to eat, more time to relax, everything seemed to be getting a little better even though we missed her. But then...something happened with my other sister"

"Did she go away too?" Jazz asked.

"Something like that" Emma said.

"What do you mean?"

"She killed herself" Emma said bluntly. "Over some dumb guy, she went out with him for a while and she really liked him. She wanted to start a band with him and his friends, she was always really shy but he changed her in a way. But then he cheated on her. She was so heartbroken, she tried to recreate herself. She dyed her hair, started wearing makeup, she even became a bit of a bully. But seeing the guy she loved with someone else tore her apart. Apparently, there was a fire in the school. Everyone managed to escape except her. When the fire department came, they found a suicide note in her phone. She said she started the fire, she wanted to try and bring her ex and his new girlfriend down, and she wanted to make sure she died too" Emma explained.

"Oh my god..." Jazz gasped, covering her mouth.

"I was alone after that. I had to go back into the system until someone adopted me. But that house was a whole wreck in itself, so I ran away. I was homeless for a bit until I was able to open my own bank account. I thought I'd be on the streets much longer, but as soon as I got my account, all the money that Lucy sent my sister, went straight to my account. I was able to buy a house...and now, here I am" Emma explained. "I thought Lucy died...I came to terms thinking I'd never see her again. It's just...it's a lot to take in"

Jazz rubbed Emma's shoulder, comforting her as best as she could.

"My parents used to be wonderful people, but after some things happened, they turned cruel. They never beat me; my mom would sometimes hit me, and my dad would throw me around. They'd always say such hateful things, and they'd compare me to my brother all the time. I stayed quiet about it until one day, my dad beat my brother so badly I thought he was going to die. He almost did die...my godfather saved his life. We've been living with him in his mansion ever since, and we never heard from or saw our parents again. I'm not sure if they're even still alive. And I feel awful saying this, but even after everything they've done I...I miss them" Jazz said.

"Jazz, I had no idea-"

"Emma, you've lost so much, and you've been through so much. But your sister, Lucy; she's still alive. She's safe, and she's ok, and she still loves you. It's gonna be ok babe"

Emma smiled, pulling Jazz into a tight hug.

# Chapter 28

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> im obsessed with the "how did you break your arm" scene from dear evan hansen.

"Sooo" Danny continued to harass Lucy. he wouldn't stop until he cracked her. "Got any funny stories to tell about when Vlad's sick? I bet he has fever nightmares, doesn't he?"

He never gets any response out of her. Danny sighed.

"Why don't you talk? Don't you ever get bored?" he asked. Lola looked at him for a moment before getting back to work. That was about the closest to a reaction he's gotten from her.

"Danny!" Jazz exclaimed. Danny looked up at his sister who barged in unexpectedly. "We need to talk"

Before Danny could protest, Jazz dragged him out of the room quickly. Once she was sure they were isolated enough, she looked at Danny with a serious face.

"Danny, do you remember the ghost that took over the school? The rock star, Ember?" Jazz whispered. Danny nodded.

"Of course I remember her, why?"

"I think Lucy is Ember's older sister" she said, even quieter. Danny blinked in shock for a moment before laughing.

"That's crazy talk Jazz. Ember is a ghost, she lives in the ghost zone, and last I checked, the two look nothing alike"

"Well, my *girlfriend* Emma told me that Lucy is her big sister, and the two of them had another sister that sounds a bit like Ember" Jazz said. "Danny, you need to be a bit more serious around Lucy. Ember may be a ghost, but who's to say Lucy isn't?"

"Jazz, I think I know what a ghost looks like"

"And even if she *isn't* a ghost, she could still be related to Ember. Ghosts could be people who died, and Emma told me her other sister died in a fire"

"Lots of people die in fires Jazz"

"She said her sister wanted to be a rock star! How much closer does it get than that!?"

"Ok you may be onto something there, but either way, I'm pretty sure there's nothing to worry about" Danny said. "Now that that's out of the way; you have a girlfriend?"

"I...yeah" Jazz said, a bit of confidence in her voice. "I like girls"

"That's great! Good for you" Danny said. Jazz smiled, relief washing over her. She always thought coming out would be something bizarre and scary. She didn't expect to be accepted right away.

"So how'd you find out you like girls?" Danny asked. Jazz blushed and messed with her hair nervously.

"I, uh, well...don't get mad" Jazz quickly said. "I think I started liking girls when dad kicked me out the house...I went to Sam's place so she could help me call Vlad because I knew he'd get you out of there. After I called him, she took care of me and she was really nice to me and...I think I fell in love with her"

"You WHAAAA-"

"Aaah! I know, I know! I didn't mean to! But I got over it, I know you two like each other" Jazz said defensively. Danny laughed, doubling over in sheer laughter. Jazz was confused as to why that was so funny, but his laughter became contagious when she found herself laughing too.

———

The next day, after school, Danny decided he'd drop by Sam's place and see how she's doing. Before he could leave, however, he was stopped.

"Daniel" Mr. Lancer called. Danny glared a bit at the man.

"Yes, Mr. Lancer?" He asked.

"Could you stay for a bit? I need to talk to you" he said. Danny frowned but sat back down nonetheless. "How are things at home?" he asked. Danny looked away, crossing his arms.

"Fine" he mumbled. "I'm living with my uncle now"

"That's good to hear. I was concerned about you and your sister last time I spoke with you two" he said. Danny continued to silently glare away from the man.

"Danny, I want you to know I'm not against you at all" Lancer began.

"Then why do you always take Dash's side!?" Danny exclaimed.

"I don't want to, but if I don't, I could lose my job!" Lancer responded sharply. "I did the best I could, giving him suspension. And even that was hard to get approved"

"What do you want from me?" Danny groaned.

"I want you to understand that I'm not the enemy. Danny, I care about you. I'm sure you probably haven't been keeping up with the news, but I had to testify in court not too long ago, and I advocated for you. I'll be honest; I always knew that Dash's special treatment was unfair. I know he's taken advantage of the leniency on him, and I know it's negatively impacted everyone. But the truth is, the school treasures that boy. He's the face of our football team, the model social student, and overall the kind of kid who people want to support. Even when he's done wrong" Lancer explained.

"I supported him, no questions asked, because that's just what I'm expected to do. But when your friends came to me about what he did,

I honestly *wanted* the lawsuit to happen. I knew that nothing I say or do would ever last enough to impact him. But your friends...well, they really showed everyone who's boss" Lancer chuckled. "I did what I could by advocating for you during the lawsuit. And I wanted to tell you this so that you at least know that someone in this school had faith in you, because after this semester...I'll be gone"

Danny's eyes widened. Wow. All this time, he would've rejoiced at the thought of never having to deal with Mr. Lancer again. But now...

"I-I'm sorry..." Danny didn't know what to say.

"I'm glad things are starting to turn around for you Daniel. I'm sorry I couldn't have done more for you"

_____

"Uncle Vlad?" Jazz called sheepishly. She'd been looking for him everywhere, but couldn't find him. She really didn't want to go to his study without permission, but she really was worried. She left it as a last resort but...

"Vlad!" she exclaimed. Vlad lied on a bed, bandaged up and weak. He was pale, sweating, he looked awful. Jazz rushed inside and tried to shake him awake.

"You shouldn't be here"

Jazz turned around to see Lucy standing over Vlad, looking as stoic as ever.

"You!" Jazz exclaimed. "What did you do to him!?"

She ignored Jazz's franticness as she brushed the hair out of Vlad's sweaty face. His breathing was heavy as he opened his eyes, smiling a bit as he looked at her.

"Ah, my Lucy" he whispered weakly. "I'm sorry you must keep finding

me like this"

He groaned sharply when she slipped an IV in his arm. She grabbed a towel, damping it in the bucket of water she pulled up and wiping his sweat away.

"Vlad" Jazz croaked, starting to cry. "What has she done to you?"

"Jasmine!" Vlad exclaimed. His voice was raspy. Jazz began to cry more out of fear and confusion for what was happening to her godfather.

"Jasmine, you shouldn't be here" Vlad said, his breathing growing heavy. "You know...you know you're not...allowed in my study". Jazz ignored him, continuing to stare at him as she cried.

"Jasmine, please...go to your room" he said.

"Vlad what's happening to you-"

"Jasmine, go!" he suddenly shouted. She flinched at his voice and decided that she wouldn't stay any longer, running back upstairs in tears.

———

Danny came home feeling heavy. He wasn't in the spirits to go visit Sam, or to text Tucker, or to go stop for a snack after school. He just came straight home, hoping maybe he could feel better. His hopes of that were crushed when he was met with the familiar sight.

"Jazz? Jazz, what are you doing?" Danny came in, throwing his bag down. He had to literally pry his sister off the floor to stop her violent scrubbing. She sobbed, shaking like a leaf as she clutched her dirty cleaning rag. Danny gripped her shoulders, shaking her lightly with a serious look on his face. Danny was scared, but he had to be strong right now. Last time his sister was this shaken to the point of stress cleaning, something really bad had happened...

"It's Vlad" she said through her cries. "I don't know what happened but he's hurt really bad"

"Did anyone hurt you?" Danny asked, checking over her to make sure she's ok. She shook her head, breathing heavily.

"No" she said.

"Where is he?" Danny asked. Jazz pointed to where she just came from, which Danny recognized was leading to his study.

"Take your medicine and try not to be afraid. Everything's gonna be ok" he assured quickly before running off.

Danny barged into Vlad's study, jumping back a bit when he saw the man in his weak state. Vlad lied on a bed similar to the one Danny was stuck to when he first got here; needles sticking out from the man's arm and a breathing mask attached to his face. Lucy was sitting in a chair next to him, running her fingers through his hair as she stared blankly away from him.

"You!" Danny exclaimed. "What did you do to Vlad!?"

Danny was getting tired of that porcelain face, the lack of verbal and facial expression from the woman.

"I'm talking to you!" he exclaimed. No response. "Vlad trusted you to keep him safe"

Lucy seemed to have been affected by this, her head now hanging low.

"What happened to him" Danny demanded.

"You wouldn't understand" Lucy whispered. "I don't even understand"

"What are you talking about?"

"Master Vlad is a sensitive, fragile man" she whispered.

Danny gave up asking Lucy his questions. Her vagueness wasn't getting him anywhere and he felt himself growing frustrated. He

marched up to Vlad, staring down at the man's body.

"Vlad!" he shouted. "Wake up!"

He didn't wake up.

## Chapter 29

Vlad never meant for it to get this bad. He woke up late in the night, no longer in need of medical assistance. His ghost powers gave his healing a boost. Lucy was there to take his IV's out and change his bandages when he woke up. But when Vlad turned around, he saw Danny sitting in Lucy's usual chair, fast asleep.

"I'm caught" Vlad sighed. Lucy stared at him, no words being said.

"How could I have taken it this far?" he asked himself, pressing his face into his hands. Lucy placed a hand on his shoulder, eyeing him remorsefully. "They'll hate me"

Lucy shook her head, squeezing his shoulder a bit. Vlad looked up at her, his empty eyes staring into her glassy ones. He smiled a bit, squeezing her hand a bit.

The two stared into one another's eyes for a bit before Vlad stood up, picking Danny up from where he sat. He made his way to the door but looked back at Lucy before he left.

"Get some rest, dear Lucy. You deserve it"

_____

Danny woke up that morning, confused. Had last night been a dream?

He slid himself off his bed, fixing the sheets out of pure habit despite the fact that there were maids for this. He walked down to the kitchen, seeing Vlad in his usual seat. Danny stared at him quietly until he was spotted.

"Hello little badger" Vlad said. Danny jumped a bit, startled by Vlad's voice. He looked around a bit, wondering why his sister wasn't in her usual spot.

"Where's Jazz?" Danny asked.

"I'm not sure. Strange, now that you mention it" Vlad said. "She's probably still sleeping"

Danny nodded, sitting down next to Vlad. It was an awkward breakfast, silent and tense. Danny wasn't sure if his memory of Vlad being hurt was real or not, as the man looked just fine now.

"Vlad, can I ask you something?" Danny asked. Vlad nodded, giving Danny his attention. "Those bandages I found...why did you have them?"

Vlad sighed, looking down. He really didn't want to talk about this, but he couldn't just lie. That wouldn't be right.

"Daniel, sometimes I get sick. It's nothing for you or your sister to worry about, I have Lucy here to take care of me" Vlad explained. Danny gave him a sort of glare that help more disappointment than malice, a look that reminded Vlad of a kicked puppy. And though the man was more of a cat person, he couldn't help but feel a spike of hurt at the boy's puppy dog eyes.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean for you to see me like that" he apologized. Danny's look didn't change. "Daniel, I'm not ready to talk with you about the issues I face"

"That's not fair" Danny huffed. Vlad sighed, not knowing what to say.

———

Danny went to Sam's house the next day. She always seemed to cheer him up when he was down. But lately, it seems as though everything that could make him happy was now covered in grey. First it was Lancer's leaving, then Jasmine's stress cleaning, now Sam...

"Hey Sam" Danny sighed. He threw his bag on the floor, plopping down on the bed next to her. They leaned tiredly on one another. She

smiled weakly for him, but he could tell she was bothered.

"What's wrong?" he asked, cupping her cheek so they could look at each other.

"It's nothing..." she tried to lie. Danny frowned. Hypocritical much?

"Sam" Danny gave her a stern look, as if testing her. She scowled stubbornly for a bit, and the two of them just silently stared at one another sharply before Sam finally gave in.

"We won the lawsuit. But nothing really came from it. The school had to pay a fine, but that's it" Sam said.

"That's fine" Danny said. "I don't care about the lawsuit Sam. I appreciate it, but I'm not bothered that nothing big happened"

"That's not the point!" She exclaimed. "I got expelled for threatening to file that lawsuit, but I still did it anyway. Now no school wants to accept me, I'm probably never gonna get into college now, and my parents are sending me off to an all girls boarding school because they think all this happened because I'm so WEIRD!" she shouted.

"Wow that's..." Danny was at a loss for words. "That's a lot to take in"

"It's fucked" she spat. Danny could feel her body shaking, and he knew she was holding back tears right now. "All I wanted was to help you. Now I've lost everything, and I didn't even get to bring you any justice from it"

"Sam, I'm *fine"* Danny assured, holding her shoulders. She glared at him stubbornly once more. He wasn't phased, he knew how snippy she could get when she's emotional, but he knew it was only because she cares.

"Bullshit Danny" she tried to sound assertive, but failed as her voice cracked. Tears threatened to spill, she bit her lip to keep them at bay. "You're at my house skipping school...you never skip school" her voice became weak, the emotions taking over as she began to cry. Danny pulled her into a tight hug, letting her cling to him. And she did. She clung to him, crying her eyes out painfully. She tried her best to keep quiet as she cried, but her sobs came out every now and

then. And if this weren't such a painful moment, Danny may even have the nerve to say she sounded cute.

"Sam, you're gonna be ok" Danny assured, stroking her hair the way Vlad had when Danny was crying like this. The memory made him only hurt more.

"I don't understand why you can't just let yourself be weak sometimes" Sam whispered once her crying had subsided. "No one's going to hurt you". Danny didn't respond. He didn't know what to say. He just continued to hug her, stroking her hair gently.

"You promise to hold me if I ever need you again? Even if we can't see each other all the time like we used to?" she asked softly, burying her face into Danny's chest. Danny blushed. The tension seemed to break, and he was able to feel just how much he loved her right now.

"Y-yeah" he whispered. "I promise". He could feel her smile a little.

"You don't have to be strong all the time either, Danny" she said. She sounded tired. Danny continued to stroke her hair.

"I know" he whispered, pressing his lips to her head.

"If goths can cry, superheroes can too"

Danny could feel her shift slightly, and once her breathing slowed, he knew she'd fallen asleep in his arms.

_____

Danny lied on the couch tiredly. Nothing really seemed interesting anymore. Tucker was too busy to hang out, now that he's been doing home schooling. Sam's off to boarding school, and Mr. Lancer lost his job because of him. It's like everything changes for the worst because of him. He didn't wanna think about it too much, but he didn't have the energy to distract himself.

*If goths can cry...superheros can too*

Danny pressed his face into the cushion of the couch, Sam's voice ringing in his ears. He didn't understand why, but he felt tears leak from his eyes silently. He didn't make a sound, he just let himself cry until he fell asleep.

Danny wasn't sure how long he'd been out; he didn't even remember falling asleep. When he woke up, the room looked dimmer, so he assumed it was late. He decided to get up and just go to his room, not wanting to be seen on the couch if he falls asleep again.

Danny went to the bathroom to brush his teeth before bed. He had to force himself to stay awake and not fall asleep standing. But something on the corner of the sink caught his attention.

# Chapter 30

**Trigger warning for explicit depictions of self harm in this chapter! Stay safe y'all**

**----------**

"What's this doing here?" he whispered. There was a razor blade on the corner of the sink, it was clean and shiny. Danny picked it up out of curiosity, but he didn't think to be careful and accidentally cut his finger on it.

"Ah-" Danny winced in pain, dropping the blade to the floor. The pain wasn't great, and more than anything, he was just startled from it.

"That...didn't hurt actually" Danny whispered to himself. He picked up the blade from the floor, staring at it curiously. The cut on his finger lightly burned, but it kind of felt nice, especially against the cool air of the bathroom. Danny slowly dragged it across his skin again, curious about the feeling.

It didn't hurt. It lightly burned, but it didn't hurt.

Some blood trickled down from the cut, the warmth feeling weird. It wasn't a lot though, as the cut was pretty small. The blood quickly dried to Danny's skin. It felt weird, kind of gross.

Danny wanted more of that burn feeling. It felt nice somehow, especially when it stung for a bit against the cool air. It felt nice.

He dragged the blade over his wrist. It was the easiest spot to work with. He cut himself a bit deeper, hissing in pain. Ok, that one hurt a bit. But the pain made him feel...awake. His heart began to beat a bit faster, and his sad laziness suddenly melted away with the burn. Danny did it again, now fully understanding the feeling he likes. He couldn't hold back a smile when he realized, this is so *wrong*, yet it felt *so **good***!

He seemed to get the hang of it when he did it once more. The blood

trickling down seemed to feel less weird too. Some of it dried to his skin, but there was more of that burn feeling from the cuts to balance it out. It didn't feel too good when it dried, but it was still an interesting sensation when the blood dripped down his arm. He got lost in his thoughts before he realized-

"Oh crap! I have school tomorrow!"

Danny quickly cleaned up. He looked at the razor blade contemplating for a bit what he should do with it. He couldn't just take it, could he? But if he left it here, what would happen? Somebody could hurt themselves with it. And Danny secretly knew he wanted to try this again...

So he took the razor blade to his room and went to sleep.

———

Danny woke up the next day groggily. His head hurt, he felt weak. He'd almost forgotten what he did to himself, but quickly remembered when he saw the cuts on his wrist. He felt shame from it; now that he was more awake, he realized just how wrong that was.

Danny wore a long sleeved shirt to cover the cuts. He couldn't let anyone see them; they'd think he's crazy! He'd get sent to a psych ward, and then someone would find out he's a ghost, and then he'd get locked away forever!

Danny shuddered at the thought. He got up, and got ready for school. The maids seemed a bit confused when he rushed out, but Danny knew that if he stayed, he wouldn't be able to hide what he did. Vlad was very perceptive; the moment he sees him, he'll ask what Danny's been up to, and Danny will conveniently leave out what he did, and then Vlad would somehow know that he's hiding something. It's that keenness that made Danny hate him at times. Vlad doesn't need to know what Danny did, it's none of his business anyway.

Danny went to school, absentminded throughout the day. He got pushed, shoved around, harassed, teased, but he didn't care. He was used to it. He was fine.

When he got home that day, he was so tired. He remembered what he did last night but he shook his head, holding back tears. He couldn't do that, Vlad would kill him if he found out! But, it would only be a little. Just enough to distract him from everything bothering him so he could at least do his homework. That would be fine, right?

Danny rushed to the bathroom, locking the door behind him. He was scared, he couldn't understand why but for some reason his body felt so...*excited.* His arms itched desperately with longing for the burn of the cuts, even though he'd only done this once before. He wanted so badly to feel his troubles melt away with the burn. Something about his desperation scared him, he didn't want to do this anymore, but he had no control. He had to give in to his urges or he felt as though he'd die.

Danny slashed his arms quickly, taking deep breaths to relish in the feeling. It was different. It felt nice, but it didn't feel as peaceful, or as innocent. Danny knew this was wrong. He knew that he'd be in so much trouble if anyone found out. He tried to comfort himself, but it felt as though his life were over. He's ruined. And it's all his fault.

Danny let himself cry. He continued to cut, at least to help him overpower the anguish in his head and his chest, but the tears wouldn't stop and it wasn't from the pain. Danny soon tired himself out so much, he could barely hold the blade. His throat hurt, his eyes burned, his arms throbbed; this was nothing like last night. He felt pathetic.

Danny rested his eyes a bit, taking deep breaths to relax himself. Once he had the strength, he cleaned up after himself, making sure to clear all the evidence of what he'd regrettably done. So much for homework, Danny had no energy left. So with his eyes drooping exhaustedly, he made way for his room and plopped himself on his bed exhaustedly.

———

"My dear Lucy, you know I trust you, right?" Vlad said. To any normal person, his voice would sound sweet, charming even. But Lucy knows him well enough to hear past the charm. She could tell something was bothering him. But if that were his opening line, she'd leave it up to him to get to the point while she fixed him some tea. Silently.

"And you know I appreciate everything you've done to take care of me when I'm sick, don't you?" he asked. She gave no response as she served him his tea. Vlad didn't seem to mind. He's used to her silence.

"But I'm under the impression that you maybe have something to do with the disappearance of one of my *razor blades*" he said, a bit more pressingly. Lucy looked at her master with the same blank eyes she always wore, and he stared back at her with a stone hard stern look. Lucy would never admit; but despite the instances of him showing her that stern face of his being so rare she could count each time on her hand, she enjoyed seeing it every time he showed it.

"Lucy, you understand how vital my tools are" Vlad pressed further, nearing her slightly. Lucy stood upright, as expressionless as always. "So if you've done anything to them, I'd like you to tell me. *Now*"

Lucy simply stared at him. She wasn't sure what he was talking about. Vlad sighed, standing up. Her face didn't change, but she secretly admired how he towered over her despite her tall frame. He eyed her as he slowly circled around her. The clacking of his shoes as he slowly paced around her body, as if he were a predator, echoed against the silence of the room. Vlad slowly ran his fingers through her hair, his breath tickling her neck as he seemed to observe her. But Lucy didn't show any reaction. It frustrated Vlad because, she very well could be innocent. But if not her, then who touched his razor blade!?

"My apologies" Vlad sighed. He let go of the strand of hair he held on to, walking back in front of her so he could at least lean on his chair

while he thought...

"I'll be back. Keep an eye on the children for me while I'm gone Lucy" Vlad said. Lucy bowed silently, as she always did.

# Chapter 31

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> So I know that a lot of cutters don't do the whole skin picking thing unless they really have to, but fuck it this is my story and I wanna project my issues onto the characters 🧢🤠
> y'all done fucked up, cuz aint NOBODY, NOT ONE OF YOU PEOPLE, stopped me. So now I'm gonna lewd tf outta this old ass man and his sexy goth maid

**Trigger warning for self harm. Stay safe yall!!**

_____

Danny felt like he was dying. His arms itched so *badly*, but any amount of touch was met with an unpleasant pain. The most he could do to *somewhat* alleviate his discomfort was scratch hard surfaces to distract himself from the pain in his arm. He scratched until his nails chipped and his fingernails were raw. But it wasn't enough. He bit and picked at his cuticles, peeling the skin from out of it's pocket until the area was raw. Danny stared in awe at the white, tissue-like flesh that came out from under his skin. He'd always thought the skin would be red, or bloody. But It was surprisingly clean, almost transparent. And it was very smooth. Danny wanted to keep going, but he knew he had to stop once his entire left hand was left raw. Thankfully, he's right handed, so he wouldn't have to use his left hand for much. But if he damaged both his hands, he knew he'd get caught. Danny wore a hoodie, which wasn't unusual since it was getting cold. Like before, he rushed out for school before Vlad or any of the maids could bother him.

Surprisingly, school was much more...dull. Dash and Paulina weren't there, the rest of the popular kids were quiet, Lancer was replaced with a temporary sub who didn't bother assigning any work, yet the whole class was so bland and grey. Danny rested his head on the table tiredly until the bell rang, not wanting to move even after class ended.

Danny was surprised to see Tucker outside when school ended. Not that he was complaining, it was just unexpected.

"Hey Danny!"

"Tucker!' Danny found himself smiling. He fought with himself to resist the urge to run into his arms for a hug, he missed his best friend so much.

"Dude, this place looks like trash" Tucked mused. Danny laughed. It's true, it's hell.

"I know, it sucks here without you and Sam" Danny said. Tucker nodded in agreement.

"Well then stop standing around and lets go, Tucker is hungiez"

"You're always hungies"

"Nasty burger?"

"You know it"

Danny and Tucker walked together, hip at hip just like old times. It was refreshing to be around someone he felt safe with. The two of them went to the Nasty Burger and talked about what they'd been doing since they last saw one another.

"But something weirds been going on" Danny mentioned, swallowing the bite he took from his burger. "Vlad's personal maid, *Lola;* Jazz says she might be related to Ember in some way"

"No way!"

"I know. It was too far fetched to believe when she first told me, but something about that woman doesn't sit right with me"

"You think she's a ghost?"

"No, I know she's not. She never triggered my ghost sense. But it's possible that they were related when Ember was alive"

"What're you gonna do? It's bad enough that you're technically your arch enemy's son now, but now his *personal maid* is probably related to another enemy of yours"

"Ugh, *please* don't call me Vlad's *son*" Danny groaned. "And I don't know what I'm gonna do yet. But I have a bad feeling that that woman is up to no good"

"Well, if you *want..."* Tucker flashed a knowing smirk, the one that Danny *knew* meant bad news. "I have a little 'no good' for us to get up to, if you're up for it"

———

Lola stood at Vlad's side while the man sat, his feet elevated on a stool in front of him as he stitched a cloth in a straight line with confused movements.

"Remind me again why you're having me do this?" Vlad asked. Lola wrapped her hands gently around his wrists, rubbing her thumb softly over the bandages.

"You're hurt" she whispered, nuzzling his hair when she saw him shiver. Vlad, though forbidding of touch by mostly anybody else, didn't pull away from the grace of his maid. He even seemed to lean into her touch, a strange motion she didn't expect from him.

"I'm more than that" Vlad whispered. Lola frowned sadly. She knew she couldn't help him; what was someone like her to do for a man so broken? Still, she wanted to do something, anything.

Lola stepped in front of her master, towering over him a bit as he looked up at her from his chair. Lola knelt before him, bowing lowly as though she were groveling.

"M'lord...my heart can't bear this any longer"

Vlad's eyes widened with concern when he heard her voice weaken.

Yes, he was very much used to his maid being a selectively mute woman, only talking when she deemed necessary; but at least when she spoke, she didn't shy her voice away from him. Her smooth, velvety voice was always so precise, almost stern, in a way that no woman could ever compare when talking to him. Did his pain truly weaken her so much, that he'd ruin such a beautiful voice?

Vlad pat her head gently, slowly moving his hands down to cup her cheeks so he could look at her face. So pale and smooth, yet impure with the large scar from her eye. He knew better than to touch it though. Lola was a woman of little emotion but the sheer terror on her face when anyone came to touch her eye was heart wrenching, even for a man who cared little for anyone else's feelings. Vlad hated to admit, but he'd grown soft. Soft for his niece and nephew, and just as soft for his maid...

"My dearest Lola" Vlad whispered, kneeling along with her so they could be at eye level. Vlad held her hands so as to comfort the woman he'd hurt. "I promise I'll get better". Lola bit her lip but didn't speak. Vlad was fine with that.

"I promise" he assured, gripping her shoulders. "So long as you're my maid and mine alone, I'll do my best"

"Then I'll be yours, down to my heart, my soul, and my *body*" Lola said. Suddenly, Vlad was no longer on equal knee level with his maid; she'd gone on all fours in front of him, nearing her face to his. And though he by no means was unfamiliar with the sight of beautiful women in this position, he found himself unreasonably flustered because it was *Lola*.

"That's quite alright" Vlad said, clearing his throat as he stood up. He took a moment to compose himself, but when he looked back to the spot on the floor, he was once again surprised to see that Lola hadn't gotten up. She was still sitting on the floor, now glaring at him.

"Come now, what's with the scary eyes my dear?" Vlad asked, fixing his tie. Lola didn't say anything. Vlad normally didn't mind her silence because he knew she had nothing to say, but he could tell by the look in her eyes that something was on her mind and she wasn't letting him on to it.

"I see spending so much time with my godson has made him rub off on you" Vlad said, a hint of distaste in his voice.

Lola still, however, remained quiet. Vlad gripped her jaw, forcing her to look him in the eye after she grit her teeth and looked away.

"What do you want from me?" Vlad gave in. Lola stood up, dusting herself off. She did not make eye contact with him even once before she bowed and took her leave without a word. The echo of the slamming door somehow left Vlad feeling more empty than he had before. He glared angrily at the cloth he'd been sewing, tossing it across the room. His stitch pattern was messy anyway.

———

"Oh my god Tucker, how did you even find this place?" Danny asked. Tucker covered Danny's mouth quickly, pulling him into a corner to hide when someone walked by. They stood still until the coast was clear. Danny pushed Tuckers hand off once they were in the clear.

"What happens if we get caught?" Danny whispered, quieter than before. Tucker made a nervous face, showing Danny that that outcome did *not* mean good news.

"Uh we may or may not get arrested for sneaking into a private prison" He answered. Danny opened his mouth but Tucker quickly slapped a hand over his mouth once more. "Don't freak out, we have to be quiet!"

Danny nodded, swatting Tuckers hand away once more.

"Dude! Vlad will kill me if he finds out about this!"

"Then be quiet, and lets be quick about this. In and out, go!"

Danny stared at the door before him. His mother was in there. He stood nervously, now feeling unsure...

"I don't know about this Tucker..." Danny said. "What would I say? What *can* I say!? I-I don't wanna bother them...I don't know what I'd do if they..."

Tucker grabbed Danny by the shoulders, giving his friend an assuring smile.

"Danny" Tucker whispered. "You're their son. They messed up big time, but you deserve to see them again, and they have no choice but to listen to you. And I *promise* they don't hate you"

Danny looked at him, unsure, before looking at the door. Footsteps sounding from down the hall made the both of them jump nervously.

"Look, if you don't go talk to them now, you'll regret it forever! So if you're gonna do it, you should *probably* do it now so we don't get caught!" Tucker whispered. Danny nodded.

"I'm going ghost!"

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> Ok so I'm really sorry that I didn't update, I've been so unbelievably fucking busy lately. Not only do I gotta worry about school, but I've also been applying for jobs (times is hard, times is haaaaard), working on my novel, doing auditions, dealing with some personal shit, blah blah blah, but I had a few ideas I wanted to go through with so I'm not gonna do any lewd shit till the time is right, but y'all made your choice ya nasties, so imma do it I swear

## Chapter 32

It was late in the evening, Vlad had bandaged his own wounds for once. He never realized just how much Lola had helped him when he was hurt, how gentle her touch was, and how much he longed for it now that he was without it. He turned to see the projections of Maddie on his computer. She disgusts him, he wants nothing to do with her. So why had he kept her? Why had it been so difficult to delete her completely?

Vlad hovered his fingers over his keyboard. He could get rid of her right now. He wants to. He really does. So why is it so hard? Why is it so scary?

It's because without his Maddie, he's just a waste of a man. She was the only woman he'd ever loved for so many years, and even with the love gone, he was afraid that if he truly, *truly,* let her go, he may never find love again.

But Vlad didn't *need* to be loved, he has a reason to live now. He has a family, he has a reason to live, and Maddie doesn't have to be a part of it anymore. He's moved on, it's time he let go. So Vlad shut his eyes and pressed the button.

Maddie disappeared from his life for good.

_____

Danny transformed and phased him and Tucker into the jail cell together, quickly changing back before his mom could see. Maddie was asleep on the floor. The room was beyond depressing; the worn out mattress was on the floor with nothing but a thin blanket and a hard looking pillow, the walls were cold and filthy, the room smelled awful.

"Hey, what are you punks doing here?"

Danny and Tucker were suddenly being stared down by three large women. They looked a lot like Maddie's sister, but meaner and scarier.

"Boys aint allowed on this side of prison, beat it shrimpies" One of them grumbled. She had curly hair cut almost like Danny's but even shorter.

"Hey! I'm actually pretty big for my age" Tucker defended. Danny glared at him.

"I-I'm just here to speak with my mom Maddeline" Danny said nervously. The three women suddenly had wide eyes at that.

"You're Maddie's kid?" The woman asked. Danny nodded.

"That's terrible. You know, we beat the shit out of that bitch for what she did to you and your sister, kid" another woman added. She had red hair, a bit longer and straighter, but there were random bald patches around her head.

"Yeah we don't take too kindly to child abuse" the last woman said. She had a blue buzzcut and was much skinnier than the other two girls. Danny felt like he wanted to cry. He couldn't voice his distaste to these women, but he felt so bad knowing his mom got hurt because of him.

"I...I" Danny didn't know what to say. He was already scared, but these women just made him feel even more afraid.

"Aye Maddie!" the woman with the brown hair and big muscles kicked Danny's mother awake. "You got a visitor"

The other women laughed mockingly while Danny watched in horror as his mother struggled to get up. He began to twitch a bit, tears streaming down his face as he remembered the way his father would beat her, how she'd struggle just like that every time she was abused by him. It was so painful to remember, it was unbearable to see his mother suffer. And it's all his fault...

"M-mom..." he choked. Maddie gasped as she looked up, her eyes wide with surprise when she made eye contact with her son.

"Danny!" She exclaimed. She made a start to run to him, but the three women quickly held her back. She didn't fight. "Danny what are you doing here!?"

"I-I'm sorryyy" he began to sob. "Mom 'm so, so sorry...this is all my fault"

The three women watched pitifully, even gangster criminals like them had hearts. And it tore their hearts to see such a young, innocent, boy cry his eyes out because of his parents own failures. Let alone, blaming himself for them.

"Sweetie, none of this is your fault. It's my fault, I started all of it" Maddie assured, her voice having gone back to the soothing motherly voice he so desperately missed. Danny couldn't stop himself from running to her and hugging her tight. He buried his face into her stomach, sobbing his eyes out while he clung to her, knowing he'd soon have to leave her again.

"I'm sorry...I'm sorryyy" he couldn't find any other words to say, he just couldn't seem to stop himself from apologizing. If he'd been a better son, maybe his mother wouldn't have grown so tired of his dad. And maybe, maybe if he were never born, everything would be perfect. They'd have Jasmine, and she's the perfect kid any parent could ever ask for. They wouldn't have had to worry about supporting their failure son and stressing themselves out, and slowly getting poorer, and their marriage slowly declining because of all the burdens he brought upon them. And maybe, if all of that could've been avoided, then maybe his mother wouldn't have cheated. Maybe his father wouldn't have gone crazy. Maybe he wouldn't be forced to live with his arch enemy, only burdening the man with responsibilities he shouldn't have to be bothered with. If he'd never been born, Mr. Lancer would still have his job, and Sam wouldn't be forced to go to some stupid boarding school. Danny truly hates himself for being the reason that everything has ever gone wrong. And he feels so small when he's forced to confront all these feelings.

"It's ok Danny, it's ok" she assured, petting Danny's hair. The way she touched his hair reminded him of how Vlad would stroke his hair in comfort whenever he was hurt or afraid.

"I love you Danny" Maddie whispered, kissing his forehead. "I've always loved you. I just wasn't good at showing it. I made some mistakes but I promise, none of it was your fault. What your father and I did was wrong, but it wasn't because of you. It's because of our own adult problems, and you're a child, so you don't have to worry about why it happened or how you could've fixed it, because that's not your responsibility. Your responsibility is making sure you and your sister are safe and happy, I wish your father and I could be there for you, but we ruined our chances with you both. I just want you to know that I love you so, *so* much Danny. And if I could go back and make this all right somehow, I'd do it in an instant"

Danny's crying seemed to slow down when he heard his mothers soft voice. His heart pounded painfully in his chest, knowing that her warm comfort wouldn't last forever.

"Mom I miss you and dad so much" Danny said. "How long are you in here for? How can I get you out of here?"

"Slow down there string bean" The blue haired chic said. The brown haired girl and the red head were still holding his mother back forcefully, but the woman with the blue buzzcut was able to let her go and approach Danny.

"Do you even know where you are?" she asked. Danny looked at Tucker for an answer, but Tucker just shrugged.

"All I know is that this is where Danny's parents were sent" Tucker said. The three women had frowns on their faces, looking disappointed.

"This is where prisoners are sent for life sentencing" The brown haired woman said.

All of them jumped in fear when the door suddenly slammed open. Danny and Tucker quickly turned around, pale faced when they realized they were caught.

"I knew something fishy was going on" a man in a uniform said. Danny and Tucker were grabbed by the ears and dragged away. The two of them winced, vocalizing their pain with little "ow"-s. But they

weren't paid any mind.

## Chapter 33

Because the servants work full time in Vlad's manor, they all have personal rooms that they have the option to stay in. Lola, being Vlad's favorite, has the privilege of being given the biggest room (next to Vlad's, that is), without needing to share the room with anyone else. Every perk that came with working for Mr. Masters applied to Lola with just a bit of extra flair. And because she's his *personal* maid, her responsibilities are a *lot* less demanding than that of the other servants. Because of this, the other servants absolutely *despise* Lola. How could a woman, who only works a slim fraction of what everyone else does on the daily, be loved, adored, and rewarded so grandly by the master? Rumors spread about Lola very quickly after her status became known; was she sleeping with Vlad? Was she blackmailing him? Was she related to him in some way? In the beginning, Lola was bullied fairly commonly among the staff. It started out lightly, but escalated gradually. But everyone under Vlad's employment soon learned that Vlad cares greatly for his personal maid, and everyone knows that you do *not* mess with the people Vlad cares about.

Vlad had originally fired the main culprits of the bullying, ruining their lives as he'd done with any other who'd crossed him. But he soon realized he'd never truly get through to people, and he needed his employees too much to keep firing them. So he updated his policies and made it very well known to his servants that from then on, he'd be implementing solid rules and expectations for every individual, and will be enforcing such rules by means of corporal punishment. No one liked the idea, but no one could oppose either. Vlad's new means of punishment were at least better than seeing your life shattered before your eyes.

Lola was shunned quickly after. Vlad kept true to his word and the first unlucky individuals to be caught in the act of bullying were made an example to the rest of the staff of what happens now to people who oppose Vlad Masters.

———

"Ow, ow, ow-!"

Danny and Tucker were dragged to an empty cell and tossed inside. The two of them looked up at the guards who had caught them with fear in their eyes. This was it, they were gonna go to jail forever.

"Sit here and *behave*. We're going to call your parents and then you'll have a *lot* of questions to answer" The guard said, his voice deep and booming.

The door slammed, and Danny and Tucker were left alone in the dark, cold cell.

"Nice going Tucker" Danny grumbled.

"ME!? *You're* the one who was crying so loudly! It's no wonder we got caught"

"Yeah well, we wouldn't have gotten into this mess if you hadn't brought me here in the first place!"

"You could've said no! Dude, just phase us out of here"

"I can't. There's security cameras everywhere, it's a prison"

"Dang..."

"Ugh. Vlad's gonna *kill* me"

Danny pressed his back to the wall and slowly slid down. He felt so weighed by...everything. Tucker sat next to him and sighed. The two had nothing to say, but they both knew they weren't actually mad at each other.

———

Vlad entered Lola's room with a tray of her favorite snacks. As

expected, she looked up at him when she heard the sound of her door open, but just as quickly looked away. Though he'd expected that, it still hurt a little bit to know he's upset her.

"Laugh at me" she whispered. "Thrash me. Dispose of me. I deserve it"

Vlad's eyes widened and he quickly put the tray down to tend to his maid. He knelt before her so he could hold her shoulders and look up at her. For the first time in a very long time, Lola showed some emotion. Her face scrunched painfully, her nose dusting itself with a pink tint as she held back tears that inevitably spilled down her cheeks in hot trails. She choked on the breath she held, quickly hiding her face behind her hands. Vlad shushed her in the same comforting manor he'd done for his niece and nephew, stroking her hair before pulling her into a hug.

"My dear Lola, I would *never* laugh at you, nor would I ever dare raise a hand to you. You don't deserve such a thing. If anything, I do" Vlad assured. Lola shook her head, unable to speak through her tears, but obviously disagreeing.

"I mean it" Vlad whispered, brushing the loose strands of hair out of her face. "By all means, I'm all yours tonight if it means making you happy. Anything for you, Lola, because I....I *love* you"

Lola wiped her tears away just enough to shoot another glare at Vlad, to which, this time confused him even more.

"You're just saying that" she said. "If the children's mother had offered herself to you right now, you'd have her hand without skipping a beat. I'm no Maddeline, Master. I'm not who you'd swoon for, for years upon years"

Vlad frowned. She had every right to be upset. How long had she been silent? How long had she had these feelings while he obsessed over the Fentons? The hurt he feels right now is only a fraction of what she's undergone for him. And yet, he's been loyal to him all this time.

"I deleted all my Maddie simulations" Vlad admitted. Lola looked at

him with wide eyes.

"You're joking" she said. Vlad smiled at her.

"I'm yours, my dear. In heart, soul, and *body*"

Lola smirked at that, finding humor in Vlad's sudden change of attitude. She crossed her legs and sat up straight. While Vlad still sat on the floor, she ran her fingers through his hair. It was soft, she liked how it tickled her fingers.

"I'd like that"

The sound of the phone ringing brought a frown to both of their faces. But before Lola could stand up, Vlad stopped her with a stern pointing finger.

"I'll handle it dear. You rest" He said. Lola stared at him blankly. She was confused, but she nodded nonetheless. Vlad quickly left to answer the phone.

"Vlad Masters residence" Vlad grumbled.

"Is this the legal guardian of Daniel Fenton?" a voice asked. Vlad inwardly groaned, preparing himself to have to deal with whatever trouble Daniel had gotten himself into this time.

"Yes, is everything alright with him?" Vlad asked.

"My name is Jordan, I'm the warden at Amity Park's private prison institute. Your son is currently in our custody for trespassing and will need you to come collect him. How soon would you be available?"

Vlad had to literally hold his breath to keep from screaming out of anger.

"I'll be there right away"

Daniel is a dead man once Vlad gets his hands on him.

## Chapter 34

Vlad marched with fury. It took every ounce of his self control not to scream out in anger when he first heard that Danny's actions had literally gotten him arrested. But it's just as difficult not to scream even now, when he's walking next to the boy and his friend, both fidgeting awkwardly.

"Mr. Masters?"

Vlad looked next to him at the woman with Danny's friend. Presumably the boy's mother.

"Yes, miss...?"

"Angela, Angela Foley" the woman responded. "I'm Tucker's mother. I wanted to thank you for paying his bail. I wouldn't have been able to pay it, but I promise your kindness won't be for granted. Tucker is going to work his butt off until he can pay you back, won't you Tucker?" she said, her voice edging on anger. Tucker gulped nervously before he nodded.

"I appreciate the concern, but I assure you it's no trouble" Vlad said. Angela looked a bit bothered by this, but did a good job of holding it in. She nodded, grabbing Tucker by the wrist and dragging him away. Vlad did the same with Danny, but flying instead of walking when he was sure no one was around to see.

———

"WHAT WERE YOU THINKING!?" Vlad shouted as soon as the door to Vlad's room slammed behind them. Danny flinched, tensing up when he heard Vlad shout.

"Daniel, I'm not in the mood for your scared bunny act. What you did could have gotten you killed! Have you even the *slightest* idea what could have happened to you if you hadn't been caught!?" Vlad

snapped, getting closer to him. Danny backed away, holding his hands in front of him defensively.

"Don't come any closer" Danny said. He wanted to sound more assertive, but his voice shook in fear. Vlad only seemed to get angrier at this.

"Or what, Daniel!? You'll do something to me? After everything I've done for you?" Vlad growled. "How can you be so reckless and throw yourself into dangerous situations, yet when I get mad at your behavior, you shrink and cower like I'm gonna do something to you? I'm not your *stupid* father Daniel! How many times do I have to tell you that!?" Vlad shouted.

"Stop it" Danny whispered, tears brimming in his eyes.

"Oh, but you don't care. You *like* your father, that's why you *SNUCK* INTO A *PRISON*!" Vlad screamed. Danny's legs gave out from under him and he fell harshly to the floor, unable to move due to the fear.

The screaming was put to a stop when the door slammed open.

"LEAVE HIM ALONE!" Jasmine screamed, jumping on Vlad to get him away from Danny. She wrestled with him for a bit, holding him down as best as she could. Of course, Vlad wouldn't hit a child; a girl nonetheless, but his moral code only made it more difficult to fight off the teenager. She was successful in rendering him helpless, and she shouted at Danny to get away.

"J-Jazz...!?" Danny exclaimed.

"Just go! I'm fine" She assured. Danny nodded and left in a scramble. But as soon as he left, he bumped into someone and fell back once more. Danny looked up and saw Vlad's maid, Lola, towering over him. She helped him up, her touch gentle and quick. She walked past him to go into Vlad's room, and Danny couldn't help but peek in after her curiously.

"Don't touch me!" Jazz shouted at her. "Get off me! I won't let you hurt my little brother!"

Danny felt his heart clench at the sound of his sister screaming. It

brought back unpleasant memories. He covered his mouth to cease any sounds that could escape him when he couldn't hold back his tears.

Jazz put up a fight but was easily overpowered by Lola, who separated the teen from Vlad. Vlad quickly got up and dusted himself off, staring at the two girls in shock. Jazz, upon realizing she couldn't fight her way past Lola, burst into tears. She slumped her body over weakly and sobbed loudly. Lola pulled Jazz into a hug, stroking her hair gently as Vlad had done once for her.

"Don't hurt him...don't...please" she sobbed. Lola shushed her soothingly, whispering soft comforting words to her until Jazz stopped crying.

"Stay here with her, I'll handle the boy" Lola said, turning to Vlad.

"That would be for the best" Vlad said.

"Leave him alone!" Jazz suddenly shouted, alert once more.

"Jasmine, dear" Vlad knelt to her to hold her hands. "No one is going to hurt you, or your brother. I promise. Everything is going to be ok"

"What is happening?" Jazz cried weakly. Vlad cupped Jasmine's cheeks softly so he could look her in the eyes.

"I'll explain everything"

———

Lola sat on a chair in her room right across from Danny. She silently sipped at the tea Vlad had left for her. Danny wasn't even touching his, only looking down at his lap awkwardly and occasionally looking up at her. Lola didn't question it though. She knew he was afraid, and she understood why. She left him to compose himself, he'll speak when he's ready.

"Who...who *are* you" Danny asked. "Why does Vlad trust you so much"

Lola put her cup down and smiled weakly. The boy wanted to know her story. How cute.

"Vlad and I saved one another from our worst" Lola answered.

"I hate how vague you always are. I hate it. And I hate how Vlad just doesn't understand" Danny grumbled, crossing his arms. "I hate it here"

Lola could tell Danny regretted saying that as soon as the words left his mouth, so she didn't say anything even when he insisted on trying to look like he didn't care.

"I don't know *anything* about either of you. How am I supposed to see you as my family when I barely know you" He asked, his voice sounding defeated. Lola nodded.

"You're allowed to feel that way. But this is a talk that deserves to be had with Vlad and your sister"

Danny nodded, slouching a bit in his sleep.

"Now, about the *situation*" Lola hummed. "I'd be wrong if I let you go free about this, and I'm sure you wouldn't want Vlad yelling at you about this, correct?". Danny nodded sheepishly.

"Right. What to do..." Lola thought quietly for a moment, tapping her finger on the table. "Well, I'm sure Vlad wouldn't do any more than this, but until he says otherwise, you're officially grounded"

# Chapter 35

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> I am sososososo SO sorry that I made you guys wait so long. I've been EXTREMELY busy, you guys don't understand how buys I've been 😩 I've literally had ZERO free time omfggg
> but I won't get into that cuz it'll only bore you. Anyway! Here's the new update! I'm sorry it's so depressing, I promise it gets better! Lmk what you guys think!

**Massive trigger warning for implied rape and explicit torture. Stay safe y'all**

———

Danny and Jazz sat on the couch together. He helped her calm down a bit while she took her meds, but she was a bit upset with him, so he could only do so much for her. Vlad sat in a chair across from them so he could face them. Lola stood beside him, like a shadow. These days, it seems they're so well attached, she may as well be his shadow.

"Daniel" Vlad began. Danny flinched. He didn't mean to, really. But the sound of Vlad's voice startled him. He tensed up and could only look down, unable to meet Vlad's gaze. "Daniel, I'm sorry I yelled at you. I didn't mean to scare you, I was just so angry, but I know I shouldn't act that way towards you children now matter how angry I am". Danny nodded slowly, still too nervous and embarrassed to look the man in the eyes.

"I'm sorry I snuck away..." Danny whispered. Vlad looked taken aback, turning his head to Lola with shocked eyes as if to ask her what the *heck* she did to the poor boy to make him apologize. It's so

unlike him! Vlad quickly composed himself, however.

"All is forgiven, so long as you promise me you'll *never* do this again. Am I clear?" Vlad asked. Danny nodded. "Good. For now, I'm confiscating your video games, and cell phone. You can have your phone for when you go out, but for the next week, you're *grounded* young man"

Danny groaned. Lola wasn't bluffing when she said he'd be grounded, but he'd secretly hoped they'd just forget about this. Still though, he's glad the situation resolved itself so quickly.

"Before you go, however..." Vlad looked up at Lola. she discreetly held his hand, in a way so that the kids wouldn't see but she could still help reassure him. Vlad took a deep breath and sighed.

"I think it's about time we tell you a bit about ourselves"

---

Lola was a good person. Well, good by her own standards. She did everything she could to care for her sisters. Ember, once she was able, pitched in to help as well, but Lola had to stick her neck out the most as the eldest, to ensure that her sisters could at the very least eat *something* every day.

All she wanted was to protect her sisters.

Lola was on her way home when she found herself attacked. She struggled, she fought, she tried to scream, but she was knocked unconscious and by the time she woke up, it was too late to be saved...

Lola and her sisters were orphans; their mother died sometime after giving birth to Emma, and their father was a deadbeat man. He eloped with another woman, but when it didn't work out with her...well, lets just say, it wasn't a very *pleasant* father-daughter reunion.

Lola had found herself in an unfamiliar home, but very quickly realized what was happening when she was met with the familiar sight of her father. Lola was repulsed; how dare he enter himself back into her life after abandoning his family and forcing his children to struggle for so many years? How dare he bring her here by force? How dare he show his face without shame?

But he smiled. He felt no guilt or remorse for what he'd put Lola and her sisters through. He didn't care. There was only one thing he wanted from Lola, and that wasn't her forgiveness, or her love.

He wanted to make her suffer in place of her mother.

Lola's father had her trapped, quite literally, so he could do what he wanted with her. And that, he did. He ravished himself on her, eating her body until nothing was left but mess and pain. He tortured her as he feasted upon her; cutting her with sharp objects while sitting on top of her, pressing lit matches to her skin after he'd tired her too much to move, forcing his urinary liquid down her throat after force feeding her laxatives, peeling the nails from off her fingers and toes and forcing her to hold them on her body while he did lewd things to the sight of it...

The torture was too brutal to speak of. Lola had been away from her sisters for only three days, but it felt like an eternity and she wanted to die. That's when she noticed something that would only make everything worse...

She became pregnant.

When her father caught on to how sick she'd become, he let her go. He had the absolute nerve to claim he had "standards", which is why he wouldn't force her to abort the baby. But he wouldn't care for it either. He got his fun out of torturing the child that resembled his ex wife the most, now he was ready to put it all past him.

But not Lola. She wouldn't let herself just walk away from this after everything he'd done to her.

By the time Lola's body healed at least enough for her to go home without any obvious injuries, her father told her she was free to go.

She asked him if she could have something to eat first. She hadn't had a proper meal since she got there, and even if she went home now, she wouldn't have any food to save her from starving. And it was true; she'd die if she didn't have a proper meal soon. Not that she cared, but she figured if she distracted him long enough, she could get her revenge by poisoning his food.

Of course, he told her to prepare it herself, which is exactly what she was counting on. She began to cook, and it was going well until she picked her poison and poured it into her father's food.

Lola was caught off guard when her father suddenly marched up to her and slammed a bottle of alcohol so hard on her face it shattered, spilling the liquid all over her face. But before she could process what had just happened, she was suddenly grabbed by the hair; her face being repeatedly slammed into the pan of food until suddenly the pan slipped off the stove, leaving the next slam of Lola's face to hit the fire from the stovetop before her father could stop himself.

Lola screamed in agony as the fire caught to her face, melting her skin away. In her torturous daze, she was unable to process her father's reaction, but she was more surprised that he didn't continue to hit her than she was at the fact that he wasn't helping her. It wasn't long before she was able to put out the fire with water from the sink, but in a panic, she rushed to get away from her father and ran away as quick as she could. She rushed to a random bedroom, where she locked the door and grabbed a phone to call for help.

Initially, she was going to call the cops, but a familiar name in the contacts caught her eye.

"Hello?" Lola felt her heart skip a beat when she heard the voice on the other line.

"Hello...?" her voice was hoarse. "It's Lola..."

"Lola! What a pleasant surprise. Why are you calling from my boss's phone?"

"My father is...your boss?"

"My boss is your *father*!?"

"I need your help"

"Anything for you, dear"

# Chapter 36

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> Guys omfg I am so sorry, y'all have no idea how overworked I've been omggg aside from school, i have my book im working on and I have my art stuff to keep up with so that my characters stay popular so that I can get my story greenlit for a tv show, and on top of that im still looking for a job and im just dying. I know thats no excuse for these slow ass updates but im really trying y'all, i really enjoy writing this fanfic and i love that so many of you enjoy it too, so i wanna keep writing. please just be patient with me, i really dont mean to make you wait

Lola waited in the room silently until she heard the knock at the front door. She quickly snuck to open the door, staring in shock at the face of an old friend who, dare say, aged *quite* well.

"Dear god, what happened to your face!?" he asked, reaching a hand to touch her burned skin. Lola flinched sharply, staring at him in terror, unable to forget the events that just happened.

"Get me out of here before he comes back" Lola whispered.

"Too late sugar tits"

Lola jumped in fear, staring behind her at her father who stood messily. He seemed too drunk to hurt her again, but she couldn't be too sure about that.

"I thought you called the cops. What's he doin' ere?"

"Sir this is extremely illegal" Vlad snapped, cutting in front of Lola so that she stood behind him, away from her father and closer to the door.

"And what're you gonna do about it, boy? You work for *me*, without me you're *nothin*" he spat.

Vlad looked at Lola for a moment, the look of desperation in her eyes begging him to do something, *anything*.

"I'm taking your daughter back home" he finished.

"Go ahead. I don't have anything more to do with her anyways"

Vlad walked Lola out without another word. The two of them were silent as they walked, it took a while before the silence was broken.

"I was surprised to hear from you again. I didn't think you even remembered me" Vlad said. Lola stood silent for a moment, continuing to look ahead as she walked.

"...I was in love with you" she whispered. Vlad looked at her in surprise.

"You? With me?" he asked. Lola nodded. "Surely you don't feel that way anymore, right?"

"I can't say I don't. But even if I did...I can't love anyone properly after what I've gone through" she answered. There was more silence between them.

"If I'd have known, I'd have saved my heart...but I'm in love with someone else"

Lola's heart never shattered so painfully.

"Vlad..." Lola stopped walking to look up at her former classmate. "Please, even if not for love, please don't leave me alone. I can't go back to my sisters with my father still lurking; he may not recognize them on their own, but if he sees me with them he'll definitely find out"

"This is so sudden..." Vlad whispered.

"I'll pay you everything he owns, I'll drive that man to the mud to work for you. I'm offering you not just my services, but my loyalty"

"I don't want your money" Vlad said, holding Lola's hands softly. "I'll take you"

———

"It was from then on that Lola worked for me. At first, she handled making weaponry suited to my powers, but as my body and abilities evolved, we knew we couldn't keep relying on equipment. So she helped me train, she assisted me in evil schemes to get practice out of my powers and while I got richer in the process, I also got stronger. I climbed to the top with my wealth and power, and with her at my side I allowed Lola to benefit from my gain and send money to her sisters so that they wouldn't struggle without her around"

Jasmine had tears in her eyes at the story while Danny had a sympathetic look on his face. Neither of them would have ever guessed that Lola, the silent, precise woman, would come from such a tragic background.

"I don't understand...why would you have powers?" Jasmine asked. Danny paled at this. He'd just realized that she was the only one who didn't know, and if Vlad had to share his secret, that meant Danny also had to.

"Jasmine..." Danny said lowly. He looked at her nervously before looking up at Vlad. Vlad nodded assuredly, silently letting him know that it's ok, *it's time*...

Danny stood next to Vlad, allowing the man to discreetly squeeze his hand as they transformed before the shocked teenage girl.

"No way..."

"We're ghosts Jazz"

There was a moment of silence for Jasmine to process what was happening right now. She wasn't too surprised on Danny's end, but *Vlad*?

"I knew you were a ghost Danny" Jazz admitted. "I've known since the Spectra thing at school"

"You knew!?" Danny exclaimed. Jazz flinched but nodded in response. Danny felt a pang of guilt for startling her. "T-then why didn't you say anything?"

"I wanted you to tell me yourself. It wouldn't be right for me to confront you about it, it's your secret Danny"

"Then, did you know about Vlad too?" Jazz shook her head .

"I would've never guessed" She said. "Wait no, scratch that. I didn't know but I'm smart enough to have guessed it"

Danny and Vlad laughed in response. The atmosphere finally felt lighter. No one was mad, no one was sad, everyone was just honest and present. And it felt like a weight was lifted from their shoulders.

"Seriously though" Jazz started again. "I'm really glad you told us all this. That must've been horrible...but, I think now we can finally see you both as people we know and not just people we're living with. I'm sorry we put so much pressure on you to tell us this stuff, I had no idea it would be something this bad..."

"What happened to Lola's sisters? And her father?" Danny asked innocently. Lola's glare when she looked up was something frightful. They didn't even realize until now that she's been looking away the whole time.

"I abandoned my sisters" Lola admitted. "And I killed my father"

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> I know this is a bit of a stretch to ask after all this wait ive been putting you guys through but could you guys please follow me on instagram @TheWijixOfficial? I'm trying to make my characters and my story popular so that when i present my show bible to executives, I'll have credibility for it to be greenlit because of fans already being interested. But the story is already done and I don't have fans yet, and I'm trying to build a fanbase so that i can make this happen. This is a huge passion project for

me, ive been working on the Wijix for years and I'd really appreciate it if you guys at least checked it out

# Chapter 37

BIIIIIIIIIG NSFW warning for this chapter! Y'all better thank me because I wanted to write so ghetto, but I chose not to cuz I figured you'd like my poetic writing style way more. So just remember I COULD'VE said some weird ghetto shit but I chose not to, for you guys!

———

"I abandoned my sisters...and I killed my father"

The teens were silent when the woman said this. Vlad eyed her carefully, making sure she was ok. He knew how much she hated speaking about her family, and he didn't want her to overexert herself with all these horrible memories.

"You killed him? But how-!?" Danny exclaimed, but was cut off.

"Daniel" Vlad warned. Danny nodded and quickly hushed up.

"Vlad helped me" Lola said. "I built him a suit as soon as I went with him, to help him control his powers. I built him weapons and defenses..." she explained.

"We went back to that man's house that night. Vlad trapped him with me so I could do what I needed to do. I tortured him. I tortured every inch of his body for three days straight until his body couldn't take it anymore and he died. I tried to kill myself afterwards. Vlad stopped me. I went back home to say goodbye to my sisters...I never saw them again after that"

Danny and Jazz were saddened, but also frightened by her lack of expression.

"I don't regret it. Do you think I'd be a good enough person to care about that man after what he did to me?"

"You're not a bad person Lola" Jazz said.

"I'm not a good person either"

"Yes you are" She exclaimed.

"I'm a murderer"

"You're our friend" Jazz said. "You're our *family*"

Lola stared at them for a bit, not knowing what to say. The silence, for the first time, got the best of her, and she had to leave.

_____

"That was quite an evening" Vlad said. Lola lied on her bed, face down. To anyone else, she may have appeared to be sleeping. But Vlad knew her better than any ordinary person. He sat beside her, not touching her, not looking at her, just sitting in silence, listening to her slow breaths begin to shake. Seconds turned to minutes, and in minutes, Lola soon sat up, pressing her face into Vlad's back. It was a light touch, but it welcomed Vlad to quickly turn around to embrace the woman into a tight hug. He didn't care if her tears stained his suit, or if the rapid beat of her heart stung his own chest. She was his to hold, and he'd hold her until the world no longer felt broken.

Sniffles turned into sobs, and sobs to wails. He held her tight, allowing his own tears to fall silently. They've always only had each other. They have a family now, but they still only can rest on one another. So he stroked her hair, wiping her tears away when she was ready to look back up at him.

"I'm ok" she whispered. Vlad cupped her cheeks, rubbing his thumb tenderly across her cheeks to wipe away any more lingering tears.

"I know you are my dear" he said. "Still, you needed this". Lola nodded, holding Vlad's wrists softly.

"I've never cried over this".

"It's about time you did. And I'll hold you if you ever need to again"

"I feel better. I don't think I'll ever need to again"

"I'm glad"

Lola tiredly pressed her face to Vlad's chest, hugging him once more. He held her wholeheartedly, his heart no longer heavy. Instead, he felt his heart skip a beat when a soft sensation made its way to his neck. it was a small action, her lips pressing themselves on his skin in a butterfly like manner, but it sent the blood rushing to his face. Well, his face being the most visible place the blood rushed to.

"Lola..." Vlad lightly pressed his fingers to his lips to repress the sounds of longing he could make. The woman looked up at him, her eyes warmer than when she held her cold stare. She looked sweet; beautiful.

"Vlad" she responded. Vlad couldn't stir up any more words, simply using his actions to speak for him.

He kissed her lips tenderly.

"It's about time" Lola whispered. And while Vlad chuckled, she kissed him once more, more passionately than he had before.

"I'm sorry you had to wait so long" Vlad said.

"Well, don't keep me waiting" Lola smirked.

"What do I do now?" He asked.

"You make me yours" She responded. Vlad nodded, catching her drift. And this time, he wouldn't push her away. He wasn't he flustered, confused person he was before. She wants him just as much as she always has, and this time, he wants her just as much, he's sure of it. And he'll continue to want her, *forever*.

Lola pushed Vlad to the bed, crawling atop his lap. The kissing continued, a wet, warm sensation they shared. The room seemed to

grow warmer, yet cold at the same time. They clung to each other, undressing one another yet desperate for each other's body warmth.

"Allow me to take the lead, my dear" Vlad said, grabbing hold of Lola's hips. "You'll exhaust yourself"

"We wouldn't want that, now would we?" Lola chuckled.

"No, I don't suppose we would" Vlad chuckled as well, finally removing what little clothing they had left, before pushing his woman onto her back. He pushed her raven black hair from out her face so he could gaze into her eyes, watching her carefully while his hands explored her body. He trusted she'd be honest if she didn't like it, but he couldn't help slightly worrying about hurting her. She seemed to have noticed, as she reassured him by pressing his hand a bit more firmly on her body.

"You're fine" she whispered. "I want this. I want *you*"

"And you're sure?" He asked, a bit more seriously.

"Very. Don't stop, I don't want you to be afraid. All I want is you" she assured. Vlad nodded, kissing her once more.

Lola closed her eyes, basking in the magic of the moment, but her breath hitched when in her bliss, Vlad's hands found their way to sensitivity. She nibbled his lip, trembling a bit under his sensual touch. He eyed her once more, and Lola wasted no time nodding, almost beggingly, to grant him permission to take it even further. He teased her a bit, pondering what he'd do to her until he was ready to act upon these thoughts. Lola twitched and shook beneath Vlad's lingering touch in such a way that made him blush. She was always so poise, so assertive; seeing her submit like this...dare he say, it's *cute*.

Lola would never have guessed how wonderful it would feel to have her man slam himself into her, as though they were magnets pulling strongly towards each other, with more force every time they're separated. She couldn't hold back her gasps, and Vlad felt a surge of confidence fuse dangerously with his lust at the sight of his woman beneath him. He knew she'd have dark circles under her beautiful

eyes the next day, as would he from the lack of sleep they were bound to face...and he didn't even feel bad.

The two of them clung to each other, crying out in a less *sad* and more *passionate* manner, when they both reached their climax. There was a moment of rest for them, breathing heavily to catch their breaths before the silence was once again broken.

"I'm not done with you yet"

## Chapter 38

To say Vlad was delighted would be an understatement. Despite his exhaustion, he walked with stride. The servants were visibly confused by his positive attitude; they'd always been used to the gloomy attitude the man carried.

"Vlad?"

Vlad turned around to see his sheepish niece staring up at him. He smiled warmly at her.

"Good morning Jasmine, how are you feeling today" he asked. Jasmine made a weird face, as if appalled by the man's happiness.

"I'm...fine, I guess" she said "I, uh, wanted to ask you something"

"What is it my dear?" Vlad asked. Jazz fidgeted with her hair a bit.

"Why doesn't Lola see her sisters anymore? Her...her *f-father*, is gone...there's no risk" Jasmine said. Vlad frowned a bit, taking a moment to gather the words.

"you see Jasmine..." Vlad began. "It's not that she can't, or that she doesn't want to, it's just..."

"She's afraid...?" Jazz guessed. Vlad pursed his lips awkwardly.

"She's *ashamed*" Vlad said. "She ran away from home, she killed her father, she hasn't spoken to her family in years...I think she's ashamed of that. And she's afraid they won't accept her. Not after what happened after she moved here..."

"What happened!?" Jazz suddenly exclaimed. She covered her mouth and whispered a quick apology for the rudeness, but Vlad didn't mind.

"One of her sisters died. She was in school when a fire started...she didn't make it out" Vlad explained. Jazz stood in stunned silence. "It's tragic, I know" he sighed, ready to comfort his niece. But he was surprised when instead of tears, she looked down wearing a

thoughtful expression. She mumbled something Vlad couldn't quite hear, much to his confusion.

"Pardon?" he said. Jazz looked up at him, a serious look on her face.

"Lola's dead sister was Ember!" She exclaimed.

"Excuse me?" Vlad exclaimed. Jazz's seriousness didn't fade.

"It's true! My girlfriend Emma is Lola's other sister, and when I brought her over, they saw each other and then they started acting weird. When I asked her about it, she told me everything. She told me about their sister, how she died, everything! And I had suspicions that they were related to Ember but now I'm sure of it!" Jazz exclaimed. Vlad stared her down sternly, no longer in the happy-go-lucky mood.

"Jasmine" Vlad said. "that's not a nice thing to say. That is serious; Ember is a ghost"

"You're a ghost! And so is Danny! It's not that bizarre! Plus, I've said before that ghosts can also be people who died!" she exclaimed.

"Jasmine"

"Vlad, it's possible! Just-"

"I've heard enough-"

"Listen to me!"

"Mmmmmn what's with all the yelling?"

The sudden third voice made Jazz and Vlad turn around to see Danny, messy and drowsy. He rubbed his sleepy eyes tiredly.

"Danny, *knows* I'm right" Jazz said. "Tell him Danny"

"Huh-?"

"Daniel may be a ghost but he wouldn't know the first thing about other ghosts, and neither would you!"

"Wha-?"

"I'm not stupid! I know what I'm talking about!"

"I've known Lola longer than the two of you have even been alive! I think I'd know more about her family than you do. And to say her dead sister is an evil ghost? That's disgusting" Vlad spat.

Jazz clenched her hands into fists, tensing up to stop the tears that threatened to fall but quickly failed in her efforts as she began to sob angrily.

"You're the worst, Vlad! I hate you!" she shouted.

"WILL THE BOTH OF YOU STOP YELLING!?" Danny shouted. Vlad and Jazz quickly gave their attention to Danny.

"What!?" the two of them shouted in unison.

"What are you guys going on about!?" He exclaimed.

"Danny, remember when I told you about Ember? How she might be related to Lola?" Jazz reminded. Danny nodded.

"That's what this is about? You guys really woke up at 9:00 in the morning and chose to start yelling about something as dumb as that?" Danny groaned.

"It's not dumb! None of you will listen to me and it's not fair!"

"Jazz, none of us can know if you're right or wrong. Why don't we just go ask Lola?"

"Just wake her up to ask her if her dead sister is a ghost?" Vlad retorted.

"Vlad, we're both ghosts, it wouldn't be saying anything bad to suggest it. Jazz has a point"

"Why, thank you little brother" Jazz smiled. Vlad sighed.

———

"You woke me up to ask *that*?"

"I know, I know, we're sorry, but Vlad and Jazz were just gonna keep yelling all day if we didn't settle this somehow"

"Well, I don't know what to tell you" Lola sighed. "I've been living here years before my sister died, I have no way of knowing what's become of her. Not that I care" She answered, mumbling the last part.

"Isn't there any way to find out? You helped Vlad build ghost stuff, you've gotta know a lot about ghosts then!" Jazz exclaimed.

"A ghost is just energy and space stuff, any traces of when it were alive; if it ever even was a living thing, are completely left behind. My sister is gone, Jasmine. Even if she were Ember, there's no bringing her back"

Jazz sat down with a sigh. She felt defeated. For once, she thought she really discovered something, like she could finally contribute useful knowledge to people she cared about. Turns out that was a bust. And she only embarrassed herself along the way. Now she's just gonna be seen as the annoying teen that thinks she knows everything. And-

Wait a minute.

"Vlad...?" Jazz called, her voice weak with confusion and slight fear.

"What is it Jasmine?" He asked.

"W-Why is your hand bleeding...?"

**Notes for the Chapter:**

> So I got dumped like, 2 months ago, and bro that shit hurt like a bitch 🧢 I'm over it now but damn, the DISRESPECT. Anyway, if any femboys or goth girls

wanna hmu, you guys can message me on instagram @HandiiDannii (If you message my professional account @TheWijixOfficial, I will NOT respond) or on messenger @Danielle Trivino
As always, stay safe, love y'all!

# Chapter 39

**Trigger warning for explicit depiction of panic attacks, and mentions of self harm and suicide. Stay safe y'all!**

_____

The room went cold. Lola looked up at Vlad, panic in her eyes. Vlad instinctively hid his hand when Jazz pointed it out, which only caused the teens to worry more.

"Don't worry about it dear, I-I probably scratched myself and didn't realize" he assured. Lola's gaze grew cold, almost glaring.

"You should let me treat it. You have a meeting tomorrow, you don't want to end up sick" she said, her voice returning to its monotonous tone she always used before. Before anyone could object, she'd already stood up and dragged Vlad away.

_____

Lola cared for Vlad's wounds despite her raging emotions. She knew Vlad could basically read her mind, but she still chose to put emphasis on her distaste with how tight she wrapped the bandages around his arm. His wince, though it slightly pained her, satisfied her, knowing her point has been made. Lola stood up, avoiding Vlad's sad gaze. She couldn't bear to look at him right now.

Vlad knew how angry she was, how hurt she was, but he still reached out for her, grabbing her wrist before she could leave him alone in the dimly lit room.

"Lola" he whispered. "Please...stay"

Lola froze when his grip softened, his hand making its way to hold hers gently; vulnerably.

She'd seen him vulnerable before. Though many wouldn't believe it, Vlad is a very sensitive man. He's so broken, and alone even though he has so many people who care about him. But that's just how depression is. He's not alone. He's empty. He's miserable. And Lola knew that pain all too well.

So despite her anger, despite her frustration and pain and sorrow, she stayed.

———

"Danny?" Jazz called. Danny was lying on his bed, watching videos on his phone when Jazz entered. He looked up at her, putting his phone down and scooting a bit in case she wanted to sit.

"What is it?" he asked. She sat down next to him, fidgeting awkwardly.

"Do you think I'm dumb?" she asked. Danny looked at her confusedly.

"Uh, no? Why would you think that?" he asked. She sighed, biting her lip lightly.

"It's just that...you and Vlad...you're ghosts. You guys live a life I could never imagine. It's like, you can understand each other because of your experiences; you guys are closer than family. And then I'm just here...if I weren't your sister, I don't think you or Vlad would even care about me" she explained. Danny took a moment to take this all in. After a moment of silence, he broke the ice.

"I mean, yeah, I guess you are pretty stupid" he said. Jazz looked up at him, irked by his words.

"Thanks a lot" she grumbled.

"What? You're the one who asked" he responded. "You really think I wouldn't care about you? Have you *seen* my friends? Tucker's a techno geek and Sam's a goth girl- AND A VEGETARIAN!. I have nothing in common with either of them! But they're my friends because they're nice to me, and they care about me. And that's all that matters. You're no different. You're kind, and caring, and you're super smart! You have scholarship offers all lined up for you! I'd be lucky if I could even get any higher than a B in any of my classes! Even if we somehow weren't related, I'd still care about you. You're like, my best friend, but also a sister"

Danny was taken by surprise when his sister suddenly pulled him into a squeezing hug, crying softly into his shoulders. But he didn't reject her. For the first time, she was coming to him for comfort, completely vulnerable. And after all the times she'd comforted him, she deserves at least this much from him.

It stung a bit, remembering the times Danny had come to Jazz for comfort. Those were awful times that he'd much rather forget. But the mind has its way of haunting you with memories you wish so badly to erase, and Danny couldn't hold back his own tears at the painful memories. When they parted from the hug, Jazz was confused to see her brother crying too.

"Danny? Why are *you* crying?" she asked. Danny sniffled, wiping his tears away in hopes to put himself at ease.

"I-I just..." he sighed. "I just remembered some things...it's hard to forget about some bad things even though it's been so long"

Jazz knew exactly what he was referring to when he said that. How their father would beat him for crying; how he'd scream and throw things, how he'd say Danny isn't a real man, and all the rest of the abuse the two were forced to endure. Jazz felt her breath begin to thin out, her lungs unable to withhold any more air. She couldn't breathe. She felt sick. She wanted to cry but she also felt as though she were dying. Is this...

It's a panic attack.

Jazz quickly covered her nose and mouth, trying her best to at least

breathe a little. But every breath she took in made her choke. Danny panicked, suddenly on alert and not knowing what to do.

"Jazz, are you ok??? What's happening!?" He exclaimed, shaking her by the shoulders. She quickly pushed him off her, scratching at her head vigorously.

"M-Medi...cine" she choked out, her voice shaky as if she would break down crying at any second. Danny quickly nodded, running of to get her her anti-anxiety meds.

———

"I'm sorry" Vlad whispered. He and Lola sat by each other, their backs pressed so that they could have their alone time while still feeling each other's presence. It was a long quiet period before Vlad broke the silence, but it seemed as though some of the tension had gone down, at least just a bit.

"I thought you stopped" Lola whispered. Vlad looked down.

"I did. I tried. I-I don't know what happened I just..." he sighed in frustration. "I really messed up"

Lola stood quiet. She didn't have the words.

"I don't know how to stop" Vlad whispered.

"Vlad" Lola quietly began. "This isn't your fault. I know what it's like; I've done it too. For just about as long as you've been hurting yourself...I've done it too. I may have stopped, but I know how hard it is to stop"

"I don't know what to do"

"You have to try harder" Lola responded; her voice was gentle, but also stern. "I almost killed myself. I don't want you going down the same road. You have a family now"

"I know, I know. I won't let it get that bad"

"You *won't*. Because if this continues...you're going to have to see a doctor"

Vlad jumped up at that. His face looked terrified, almost angry.

"No. I won't" he whispered.

"Vlad, I promise you'll be ok-"

"***YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH ALL THOSE YEARS***!"

Lola shut her mouth. The number of times Vlad had ever shouted at her were so low, she could count each instance on her hand. She knew he held no malicious intent, he was merely afraid, but his booming voice frightened her. It reminded her of her father.

Lola opened her mouth, but found that she couldn't get the words to come out. Vlad's face went pale when he saw what he'd done. His lover was under so much stress that she couldn't even speak...and it's all his fault.

*'Vlad'* Lola resorted to the only option she had left to talk some sense into her man; sign language. *'Please...just listen to me'*

Vlad took deep breaths, his body shaking in fear. His breath hitched, panic rising up his chest despite there being no danger. He choked, bitter tears making their way down his cold face. He felt sick, he felt dizzy.

*'I'm sorry'* He signed in response, his hands shaking. *'I'm sorry...please don't send me away...they'll hurt me-'*

Vlad's legs gave out from under him as he began to sob. Lola quickly lunged forward to catch him, saving him from hitting the hard floor. She held him gently, but was still a bit startled when he suddenly held her tightly. His grip was strong, though his body trembled terribly; almost as if he feared she'd disappear if he let her go.

He held her desperately; clinging to her love, her comfort, her

healing, as much as he possibly could. And Lola generously gave it all to him, stroking his hair and rubbing his back softly as she held him in this embrace.